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BY

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INTRODUCTION.

Early in 1944, a leading article of unusual import and interest, headed 'Caste Must Go', appeared in the well-known Congress paper, the *Bombay Chronicle* [4-2-1944]. It was a frank admission of the total failure of the movement for 'Uplift of Untouchables', known as the 'Harijan Uplift' movement, started by Mr. Gandhi twenty-five years ago with the avowed object of removing the 'curse' of untouchability; and the article rightly came to the conclusion that if untouchability was really to go, 'caste must go'. There was nothing new or startling in this conclusion; any number of Indian writers who have really given serious thought to this problem have seen and admitted that the outcaste with his untouchability is the logical and inevitable outcome of the caste system with mutually exclusive castes of unequal socio-religious status by birth. For, over and above strict endogamy, mutual untouchability of some sort comes down right from the top of the system for hundreds of years at least, not only has the Brahman caste refused to eat with any other, even among Brahmans themselves there are hundreds of sub-castes that cannot dine together. From times immemorial the humblest and foulest social services and economic functions have been performed by the 'fifth' caste outside the pale of the original and hypothetical four-caste communion, and strictly hereditary vocations being an integral part of the caste system, these outcaste communities, segregated in locations outside towns and villages, have always been branded with the stigma of untouchability by birth.

Hence there was nothing startlingly new in the idea that the outcaste could disappear only with the disappearance of caste. But even the most insistent and sanguine Hindu reformers have not the courage or the inclination to say uncompromisingly that caste must be destroyed root and branch immediately, now and here; they vaguely hope or expect that somehow, somewhen, at some incalculable future date, caste will fade out, and then everything will be all right with the vast Hindu community. For all high caste reformers, this ultimate consummation, devoutly to be wished in theory, is in practice not a very pleasant one, and most of them would rather see it relegated to some vague futurity tha

not easy to forget or escape from his inherent Brahmanism. This spirit of Brahmanism is so subtly potent and pervasive an influence that even the most sincere Brahman reformers—even those who have actually broken caste rules themselves—find it difficult to put it aside entirely or contend against it successfully. It is an insidious aristocratic feeling of inherent spiritual and social superiority by birth that no temporal accident or misfortune can affect; even the most miserable Brahman beggar is in a way superior to a Rajput prince. So, without his meaning or even knowing it, a Brahman reformer's thinking and argument and outlook may be, and is, vitiated by this elusive spirit,—as we shall see again and again as we proceed in our inquiry. Hence, the general tendency even among such reformers is to be satisfied with resolves and resolutions, with declarations and manifestoes, with gestures and soul-satisfying catch-phrases, such as spectacular street-cleaning by high caste persons on some appointed day in the year and self-hypnotising slogans like ' Untouchability is gone ', etc.

Having been interested for more than forty years in the inter-related problems of caste and outcaste, and in the dogmas of Karma and rebirth that are at the root of the caste idea, I wrote to the *Bombay Chronicle* commending its brave leading article and its braver caption, correcting some of its mistakes of history and fact, and suggesting a solution of the otherwise insoluble problem of untouchability [*vide* Appendix A]. My suggestion was that as caste is not likely to ' go ', at least in a reasonably near future, however devoutly we may wish it to go,—for, if caste goes, ' Hinduism ' itself goes,—and as it is impossible in existing circumstances for caste Hindus to absorb and assimilate the Untouchables, it would be to the immense benefit of these unfortunate people, and of the country at large also, if they would in a body embrace Christianity. When I made this suggestion I did not think I was doing anything strange or startling. But the storm of criticism —and undeserved and irrelevant personal vilification also—that my letter raised showed how unreal our professed liberalism is, and how unwilling our highly educated classes, including even professed social reformers, are to face unpalatable facts, and how prone we are to drug our minds and lull our consciences with mere resolves and shows of reform, face-saving formulas, and self-hypnotising catch-phrases like ' removal of untouchability ' ' and

Sufficient harm has, I think, been done by shutting our eyes to unpleasant facts and imagining that sentimental phrases and window-dressing devices can do away with or bury these facts, at least so far as the outside world is concerned. Surely we cannot delude ourselves, or permanently delude the outside world, by such ostrich-like devices. How this fear of the outside world coming to know our defects and drawbacks haunts the minds of even the more thoughtful among our publicists, is strikingly illustrated by the following curious extract from the justly admired Gujarati writings of a versatile man of letters who is also a shrewd and observant satirist, and who has been a staunch and active Congressman in his prime : " How are the English to blame for ruling over us when we ourselves are rotten ? When I scrutinise our past and our present, I wonder how far the praises we sing of ourselves are true. Are we, and were we, really spiritual ? . . . . . . I do not wish to write more on this subject. . . . I do not wish to supply material for persons like Miss Mayo. We must hit upon means to remove our faults without putting them on paper ; otherwise foreigners will make use of them to put us down still more." [*Prasthān*, Kārtik, 1985 (November, 1928)]. But how are these 'faults' to be ventilated and 'removed' otherwise than by 'putting them on paper' in this newspaper age ? By privately denouncing them in secret conclaves held underground, and at the same time boldly proclaiming in public that they just don't exist ? And are 'foreigners' grown up children with arrested brain development that they cannot see these 'faults' unless we foolishly 'put them on paper' ? Even if we succeed for a time in making a brave show in the eyes of foreigners, is not the reaction even more damaging when these undoubtedly and painfully real 'faults' do become known to the observant foreigner ? Take for example the devastating articles by Mr. Herbert L. Matthews, special correspondent of the *New York Times*, reproduced with admirable courage by the *Bombay Chronicle Weekly* [22-8-1943 and 24-10-1943.] The organ of Calcutta University, the *Calcutta Review*, a serious magazine with decidedly Nationalist and pro-Congress leanings, had unwillingly to admit the truth and justice of the searching analysis of the present state of public affairs in India presented with scrupulous impartiality by Mr. Matthews. It is worth while noting carefully what this responsible magazine, edited by a highly respected

cially as our inquiry, as it unfolds, will illustrate the anguished admissions and rueful strictures made by the editor: "He [Mr. Matthews] tells us that the people he met in this country mostly regarded themselves as Hindus, Muslims, Brahmins, Non-Brahmins, Punjabis and Bengalis, very few regarding themselves as Indians first, foremost and always. The Indian National Congress stood for India and believed in Indian nationalism as a matter of principle. But, Mr. Matthews observes, very few of even the leaders of this organisation thought really in terms of India as a whole. We wish the reading of the Indian scene by this famous newspaperman of the United States was positively wrong. But it is not to our credit that we cannot find much fault with his observations......Centrifugal forces have possibly nowhere been more active and virile than in this country. During the nineteenth century and the early years of this century the Indian National Congress stood and acted unreservedly for nationalism." [The writer here refers to Gokhale and his political creed and proceeds:] "But it is regrettable that during the quarter century which has elapsed since his death there has been a considerable departure from the ideal [of Indian nationalism] which he cherished and practised......Territorial provincialism has also [besides communalism] become a bane of Indian politics. It is unfortunate that this provincialism has been encouraged and stimulated even by great educational leaders and high ranking Congress stalwarts." [*Calcutta Review*, September, 1943.]

Everyone of the counts in this charge, made more in sorrow than in anger by a sincere but disillusioned and saddened nationalist, will be found repeatedly illustrated as we proceed in our mainly fact-finding inquiry. The charge courageously, though unwillingly, reveals a state of affairs that is most deplorable and disheartening no doubt, but which was inevitable when we bear in mind the fact that we have fondly expected pretence and make-believe, slogans and catch-phrases, to bring about—or, at least, to do duty for—the real 'change of heart' in ourselves that is absolutely necessary for counteracting the potent and fatal 'centrifugal forces' mentioned by the *Calcutta Review*, in order that even a semblance of a stable autonomous national government on democratic lines can function tolerably in this vast sub-continent. We have wasted no end of heat and energy in building up an imposing façade of all India nationalism with the help of 'national' slogans and songs

processions and flag-salutations on 'national days' and during 'national weeks'; but none of these devices can permanently camouflage, and we cannot wish away, these fatal 'centrifugal forces', such as the baffling variety of conflicting creeds and castes, provincial and linguistic jealousies, deep-seated cultural and political antipathies and animosities,—to speak nothing of the bafflingly unfathomable gulfs dividing intensely caste-conscious super-bloated Seths and Sahukars, and the still more caste-conscious Brahmans who claim to be the *ne plus ultra* of 'Aryan' super-culture, from the hundreds of millions of low-caste and depressed caste Hindus who die like flies when the rains fail and whom the Bania-Brahman flower of 'Aryan' culture have, through centuries untold, not only kept deliberately like dumb driven cattle, but also treated as much lower than animals.

We have made desperate attempts in the last twenty-five years to pretend that these 'centrifugal forces' do not exist, or that we have successfully eliminated or mastered them. And yet, perhaps because of this pretence, these forces were never more vigorously active than they are today. Is it any use keeping up this pretence? Is it not necessary to give up emotional politics and do some hard thinking and rigorous heart-searching? Reviewing the Rev. Nicol Macnicol's 'The Making of Modern India', a veteran Bengali politician and publicist wrote about twenty years ago in an unimpeachably patriotic and decidedly pro-Congress magazine of all India repute: "It is always good for us to see ourselves as others see us; and who among us will be so bold as to deny the truth underlying the following countercharge?—'The greater part of the actual Hinduism today sprawls across the land, naked and gross like the red-painted stones that represent its gods.' This is what our popular Hinduism comes to in the minds of the vast majority of its votaries who are Pariahs, Untouchables and depressed classes, the submerged nine-tenths of its population, treated, as the author rightly says, as 'subhuman'. And taking stock of the achievements of Hinduism, a Christian Missionary has a right to observe as follows: 'This is the most that the Hindu civilisation, for all its ideals of compassion and of calm, has been able to do for these poor people throughout its long history. Instead of helping them to self-respect it has kept them down in ignorance and slavery and closed for them the door of hope.'" The reievwer also quoted with tacit approval what the book under

review had put even more starkly: "When one considers the oppression and degradation of millions in India, left thus in contempt apart, 'women and Śudras born of sin', and those more contemptible still, the Untouchables, one cannot think that the killing of the body is as evil in its consequences as this slaying of the soul." [*Modern Review*, September, 1925]. Thus again and again have our more thoughtful writers and publicists faced facts as they are unflinchingly, and admitted their ominous gravity; but we are as far away as ever from any real solution of all our baffling problems. And not the least baffling of them all, and certainly not the least important, is the problem of untouchability.

I cannot claim expert knowledge of this painfully interesting problem. But it has so happened that circumstances have kept me constantly in touch with it throughout a fairly long life. I came in personal contact with it as a child, and later on my studies and my vocation have kept me interested in it. It was just about fifty-five years ago that I first came to know untouchability in the shape of a huge fellow student with a perpetually smiling and shining black face, a very soft voice and extremely gentle manners. He used to squat on the verandah just outside the class room and do his sums and exercises on an unframed slate which he had to put down on the ground before one of us could take it up for being passed on to the teacher; and it used to be returned to him religiously in the reverse order of the routine. Having been born and educated in a Marathi speaking province, I always had for my school-mates high caste Hindu boys, mostly Brahmans, and I grew up hearing and knowing and reading more about Hinduism than about my own faith. Even at college my special subjects were Sanskritic, and for two of the most impressionable years of my life I lived with a devout theosophist, a most lovable man with the transparent heart of a child, who, though born a non-Hindu, was a confirmed Hindu at heart, religiously read a chapter of the Gita before retiring to rest for the night and was cremated at Benares after his death. This association created early in me a taste for further dabbling with Hindu religion and philosophy which form the bedrock on which the edifice of theosophy is built. These incursions, and further reading for and after my degree examination, resulted nearly forty years ago in a carefully documented and fairly long paper on the doctrines of transmigration and Karma, which are at the very root of the caste idea. When later I took

up a vocation, the most important part of my duty, for about thirty years, was to read or glance through about a hundred Indian newspapers and magazines, and hundreds of other publications, in half a dozen languages. It was also part of my duty to give opinions on matters and disputes concerning castes and creeds which made it necessary for me to read up these subjects and refer to authoritative books on them. Twenty years ago, I began writing articles, notes, etc. on the subjects of caste and, especially, untouchability, and some scores of these must have appeared in print during the next five or six years. Some of these which I believe are not even today out of date, and which throw light on some aspects of the subject, are appended at the end of this book in Appendix B.

For more than twenty-five years now I have been collecting cuttings and excerpts from newspaper and magazine articles, notes, etc., in English, Gujarati, Marathi, Urdu and Hindi, and also taking notes from books in these languages and also in Sanskrit on a variety of oriental and particularly Indian subjects. A very large number of these excerpts and notes are on the subject of caste, especially as it affects the problem of untouchability. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that in this book I have not utilised even a fourth of the material lying scattered and unarranged in my collection. And yet I am certain that I have not distorted the general outlines of the picture or unduly stressed or softened any important feature of it. Perhaps if I had carefully combed the collection I could have deepened the impression created here; I should not be surprised if some striking excerpts have been left out through inadvertence or impatience. I am also certain that I am not saying anything new or startling in this book. If I casually run through my notebooks, etc., I come across statements made by earnest and thoughtful Indians, who are very good Hindus too, which say even more strongly and uncompromisingly what I have said here; in fact, I have allowed credible and unimpeachable witnesses to speak for themselves and develop the thesis rather than play the part of an advocate who tries to make the best of the evidential material at his disposal by skilful exploitation of it and fluent advocacy. Here, for instance, is what a Bengali writer, Sudhamsu Ghose, says in a five column review of a Bengali book, 'Kshayishṇu Hindu' ['Decadent Hindus'] by Praphulla Kumar Sarkar, editor of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*: "The caste system which forbids intermarriage and restricts each caste to a particular

vocation and implies not only the negation of equality but the organisation of inequality, exclusively on the basis of inheritance, has obstructed and is still obstructing the development of unity among the Hindus......You are a Brahman because your father was a Brahman ; or a shoe-maker, or a scavenger, weaver or washerman, for the same reason. That is why the Hindus are no longer a majority community but a combination of different groups of minority communities. The number of these minority communities among the Hindus is not less than two to three thousand...... Caste, sub-caste, sub-sub-caste,—the process of division went on in the past and is still going on separating. The perversion of the Hindu religion has resulted in the seven or eight crores of 'Untouchables' who exist within the Hindu fold only in name. Another seven or eight crores of 'Untouchables' have become Musalmans, and a few crores have accepted Christianity. These are hard unpalatable truths. It is idle to lay the blame for the weakness of the Hindus at the door of a third party......Hinduism asks of the ordinary individual at present not so much the acceptance of any precise intellectual or mystical dogma, but rather that he should adapt himself to the social position in which he was born—that is, his place in the caste hierarchy—and be diligent in his observance of the traditional duties and restrictions it imposes on him......" [*Behar Herald*, 10-3-1942]. Ignoring as unimportant the incorrect figures, I would only correct two of the statements made by the writer : Indian Muslims are not recruited solely or even mostly from Untouchables as he alleges ; innumerable Brahmans, Rajputs, Jats, Gujars, Banias, and Śudras have embraced Islam during the last seven or eight centuries, to speak nothing of the large influx of Arabs, Turks, Persians, Afghans and Central Asian Muslims who have made India their home. Similarly, many Brahmans and other caste Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Parsis, etc., have embraced Christianity in the last three hundred years and more. But in spite of these small inaccuracies, this extract sums up, so to say, an important part, if not the whole, of my main thesis. And yet I know I am treading on dangerous ground. As a sober and sympathetic British critic of Hinduism has said, "it is one thing to acknowledge and denounce the faults of one's own people, and it is quite another thing to have these faults pointed out by a stranger." But I can plead in all earnestness that by birth and long heredity I am a full-fledged Indian, and by close association, affinities and studies

I am almost as much a Hindu as anything else. With all that I would have hesitated to air my views on the subject if it had not been deliberately, and I think quite rightly, lifted out of the socio-religious field twenty-five years ago and posited as a main problem of general Indian politics; removal of untouchability was the very first plank in Mr. Gandhi's original political platform. In these circumstances, I submit, I have every right as an Indian interested in the political future of my country to inquire how far untouchability has been removed by the means adopted by our political leaders so far, whether it is likely to be removed by these means in a reasonably near future, and—if the answer to these queries be in the negative—what should be done to remove it and thus remove a great obstacle from our advance to full nationhood.

Another extract that has turned up accidentally is still more arresting and appropriate since, besides fully supporting my main argument, it prophetically foretells the grim fate of venturesome people who, as said above, tread on such dangerous ground. It is from an unusually outspoken address delivered before the Young Men's Hindu Association in January, 1935, by Sir Govind Madgaonkar, then a Judge of the Bombay High Court. Sir Govind characterised the Hindu community as "superstitious and caste-ridden," and "so vain and eaten up by jealousies among ourselves that throughout the centuries we have often invited the foreign invader and have never been able to repel him or unite against him",—and then he proceeded: "Our better, indeed our only course, however bitter, is for us to ask ourselves why we are a failure among nations. I submit that there must be inherent weaknesses in our ideals, ideas and institutions in the past to place us in our present humiliating position." Stating and criticising some of these ideals, ideas and institutions, Sir Govind said: "And......in our life here our ideal is a society not progressive but stationary, bound down in the minutest details of conduct by a 'Sanātana dharma'......The soul, our blood, our caste, is everything; our community, our country, nothing......" About the doctrines of Ahimsa and Karma he said: "Soon after the great famine of 1900 in Gujarat, I have myself been a witness of Hindu cultivators opposing measures to kill the rats which were destroying their crops, solely because of the doctrine of Ahimsa......Similarly the combined doctrines of Karma and reincarnation too often—it may be wrongly—result in fatalism and apathy." After advocating

abolition of caste and child marriage, emancipation of women, etc., he declared: " With all this foresight and courage and right solution, the ideal of Swaraj is sufficiently difficult of attainment. Without, it is in my opinion impossible." Sir Govind Madgaonkar fully realised the unpleasant consequences of speaking out such unpalatable truths, and so he added with dispassionate candour: " We cannot be strong and healthy unless we analyse and realise our own weaknesses and seek to remove them. But such an attempted analysis of our weaknesses is never a pleasant task; it invites judgment on ourselves......Our countrymen are apt to confound us at first sight with libellers, hired or honorary, both equally dishonest, of India in general and of Hindus in particular " [*Bombay Law Journal*, May 1935].

And that is exactly what happened to me in 1944 when I published in the *Bombay Chronicle* the letter on the article ' Caste Must Go ' mentioned above. In a unique masterpiece of mauled English, a deliciously happy combination of Mrs. Malaprop and Babu Jabberjee, I was denounced as a hound that was " hunting the Hindus," and that too " at the behest of *the* British policy " which had cried " a balleyhoo to all those who wanted to hunt the Hindus." For the benefit of those who may be puzzled by the unlovely Americanism ' balleyhoo ' which is misspelt and which makes no sense here, I may explain that it is a malapropism for ' tallyho.' And as for " the behest of *the* British policy," I am constrained to state that I have never in my life received ' the behest,' orally or in writing, of ' the ', or any other, ' British policy '; nor have I ever ' hunted ' anything at the ' balleyhoo ' of anybody. This characteristic and delightfully clownish personal attack on me was ably backed up by another half-baked and humourless ' nationalist ' who hid himself behind the initial ' K.' As these attacks, and still more my replies to them, created considerable interest in distant parts of the country and among the highest political circles, I have reproduced them, especially at the request of several leading Indian politicians, in Appendix A. I have ignored the other deliberately dishonest attacks of petty-minded little humbugs signing themselves R.K.P., etc., etc.

The present book, again, has arisen out of a similar attempt to correct some mistakes of fact and judgment in an article in the *Rast Rahbar* of Bombay by Professor A. R. Wadia, late Director of Public Instruction, Mysore State, which I reproduce as an intro-

ductory section. When I began replying to this article I never thought I would go beyond two or three moderate sized instalments. But as I went on writing, I found that the subject developed itself, in fact it ran away with my pen in spite of myself; and instead of resulting in a brief newspaper reply the matter took the shape, after the first few instalments, of sections of a fair-sized book. In a way, therefore, I have to thank Professor Wadia for providing the incentive that has made me unload my teeming note-books and thus make up a fully documented monograph on a subject that has fascinated me since my early college days. I do not think I am in any way unfitted to approach the subject in a purely objective and even strictly scientific manner. When my letters in the *Bombay Chronicle* created something like a sensation, the Hindu social reform paper of Bombay observed: " Mr. Sanjana, who is neither a member of the Scheduled Castes nor a caste Hindu, but who is an onlooker, perhaps sees more of the game than either of the actual participants." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 11-3-1944]. I think this is a very fair estimate of my *locus standi* in this delicate matter,—though I would add further that as I am not a Muslim, nor a Christian, I happen to be in the position of an absolutely neutral outsider who is entirely free from any personal predilections or prejudices. I have been a dispassionate, but fully conscious and fairly wide-awake, ' onlooker ' for more than forty years now; and as I have no personal or communal or creedal axe to grind, I think I am in a position to view the problem steadily in the cold light of reason and quite objectively, without being consciously or unconsciously influenced by anything like a ' personal equation.' I have conscientiously kept before my mind—and followed, I venture to think, fairly successfully—the last request of Othello: "nothing extenuate, Nor set down aught in malice."

Still, in spite of my strictly impersonal attitude, objection has been taken to the tone of what I have written on the subject, among others by my friend the Congress leader mentioned in Section I. It is generally objected that what I write is harsh and bitter, censorious and cynical. As for harshness and bitterness, I think it is truth, especially unpleasant truth, that is harsh and bitter. Similarly, the censure that is resented lies in truth itself, and in the mere exposure of smug self-satisfaction and canting hypocrisy and humbug and pretence, that the world at large swallows blindly or winks at deliberately. As for cynicism, I doubt if anyone is really born

a cynic ; it is the hard won experience of the world that makes for the cynical temperament in men who have the capacity and the courage to think for themselves and to speak out the truth as they see it, while standing aloof from the scramble for money or power. Especially if one keeps away from the swirling gutter of politics and watches it from a fair distance, the antics of active politicians cannot but create an amused cynicism in the onlooker, as a natural reaction to the canting hypocrisy of shrewd and hard-headed but glib and slobbery public men who for purely political reasons or for the sake of cheap popularity worship in public popular idols whom they grossly abuse in private. For instance, it is a notorious fact that a certain shining light of Liberalism, a front rank politician (now on the shelf) and a mellifluous speaker and preacher of high-faluting moral platitudes, who becomes quite hysterical when praising Mr. Gandhi in the press, and who calls him publicly 'Christ' and a world saviour and what not, always uses most opprobriously contemptuous language about the same Mr. Gandhi in private conversation. Any number of Mr. Gandhi's professed disciples and followers do the same thing. How can one help feeling cynical, and even pessimistically so, in the midst of so much and such sickening hypocrisy and shameless charlatanry? When a certain Indian 'philosopher', who is certainly a very wide-awake, politic and worldly man of the world, tells an audience that Mr. Gandhi is one of those rare spiritual beings whose very 'darshan' (sight) takes away our sins, the first impulse any decent sinner has is to shout something profane. Is it very surprising if this natural impulse to profanity at the sight of so much and so systematically practised hypocrisy and humbug should take the form of ironical cynicism when toned down and tamed for public consumption? And what is better?—To say one thing in private and another in public, or to speak out what one really feels? And, again, am I the first to gird a little now and then at the gross and all round humbug and hypocrisy that have come into general fashion ever since we Indians are supposed to have spiritualised our politics and become the sole repositories of truth and spirituality in this Satanic world? Any number of disillusioned devotees of the Congress have used picturesquely and startlingly forceful language, and even grossly abusive invective, about the highest Congress leaders and their methods. A famous Gujarati man of letters, who is regarded as the foremost living poet of Gujarat, has

used in this connection, and even now uses, language so luridly sulphurous that it would almost scorch the paper if I were to reproduce it here. And surely it is high time we learnt from the Satanic West the healthy practice of introspection and self-criticism? As our social reform paper—one of the very few Indian papers that have the courage to swim against the stream and speak out unpopular truths—has rightly said: "The great redeeming feature of western culture and civilization is their gift of self-criticism. It is a gift which we in this country have not yet learnt to value at its proper worth." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 8-3-1941].

It is a good sign that some of our leading Congress politicians themselves have begun to indulge in such self-criticism. I shall quote here from an article written by Mr. S. Ramanathan, a Congress minister of Madras,—(again courageously reproduced by the leading Congress paper of Bombay),—which, incidentally, illustrates my main argument admirably. One important point rightly emphasised by Mr. Ramanathan at the outset should first be carefully borne in mind as it will be amply illustrated and proved as we proceed with our own inquiry, and as it answers beforehand a general excuse made by Mr. Gandhi's apologists that he is not responsible for the sins of commission and omission committed by the Congress: "The following criticism of Gandhism applies to the Congress since the two are inextricably bound together." I do not think any honest person will question the justice of this bare statement of a very well-known and widely admitted fact. Indicting what he calls 'Gandhism,' Mr. Ramanathan writes:—"Gandhism has given rise to a worse evil than the Hindu-Muslim conflict. It has justified the caste system and has given it a fresh lease of life. No doubt Gandhiji has passionately denounced untouchability,.... But of what avail is mere verbal expression which does not flow from the mental comprehension of basic realities? Untouchability is but a feature of the caste system, and caste draws its nourishment from the pernicious doctrine of Varnāshrama which is a vital part of Gandhism. Varnāshrama is the naked and unashamed formulation of the theory of racial superiority, of colour bar. It has justified the arrogance of the 'superior castes' and has suppressed the millions of the toilers through thousands of years. It has driven vast sections of the Hindus to seek solace and self-respect in other faiths, in Islam and latterly in Christianity......Our leaders ......have talked big of the abolition of Untouchability without

speaking a word against, nay even condoning, the doctrine of Varnāshrama on which the whole edifice of caste is built up...... Untouchability is the underlying motive of the entire caste system which is a gradation of merit attached to birth, each caste being distinguished by the particular degree of untouchability with which it is tainted. The Brahmin caste is pure gold, 24 carats; other castes are alloys in varying proportions until we descend down to the Untouchable caste which is merely the base metal, unredeemed by any admixture of precious gold. The present generation of our leaders have not had the courage to put down this evil institution. There is nothing impossible about abolition of Caste if our great nation really makes up its mind......The foreign Government could not have prevented our achieving this revolution." [*Bombay Chronicle Weekly*, 7-11-1943].

This is a very clear and concise exposition of the problem of untouchability; it shows how untouchability is part and parcel of the caste system, a logical and inevitable outcome of the caste idea, and how it is impossible to eradicate untouchability while cherishing the caste system in which it has its very root. And the indictment of 'Gandhism' and of the Congress leaders including Mr. Gandhi for 'talking big' and 'passionately' denouncing untouchability while jealously guarding caste, the root and source of the evil, is perfectly just, logical and unanswerable. But when Mr. Ramanathan declares that "there is nothing impossible about abolition of Caste if our great nation makes up its mind," he is, I fear, carried away by his noble enthusiasm and does not quite realise the consequences of 'abolition' of caste root and branch. Caste is so closely and inextricably bound up with some of the most vital and fundamental dogmas of Hinduism—with the basic doctrines of Karma and rebirth according to Karma—that real abolition of caste would practically mean the abolition of Hinduism; in fact, as I have said before, if caste goes, Hinduism goes. But Mr. Ramanathan is on perfectly logical ground again when he writes: "It is a disgrace to our province [Madras] that rooms in our restaurants are still reserved 'for Brahmins only,' and there are boards still hanging in houses along our streets 'To let for Brahmins.' What right have we to condemn the South African Pegging Act which seeks to reserve quarters 'for Whites only'?" If I remember rightly, this was the very argument urged by Gokhale when the segregation of Indians in South Africa became about fifty years

ago an all India political question ; and I think it was from Gokhale, whose disciple Mr. Gandhi once professed to be, that he first got the idea of 'Harijan uplift' being not only a socio-religious question of interest to Hindus only, but also a major political problem of all India importance.

As for reservation of tenements for particular creeds and castes, it is not in Madras alone that this caste spirit of segregation is to be found rampant. About New Delhi a Muslim writes: "In...... New Delhi as in many other places, no Hindu will let his house on rent to a Muslim." [*Deccan Times*, 24-1-1943.] In Bombay, generally supposed to be a cosmopolitan city, there are any number of houses and even whole localities where non-Hindus, especially Muslims, cannot find a single room to live in. An Indian Christian complained in a Bombay Congress paper, about a suburb of Bombay: "Go to Ghatkopar,........and you will find Bania or Hindu...... raj in operation. One of my friends, who was not a Hindu, wanted a room there as he had secured a job........with a Hindu doctor, but......he was treated as a dog, no Hindu landlord being willing to rent a room to him though there were many vacant. Go to any place in the suburbs, no Hindu will let his cottage or bungalow to a non-Hindu. Everything Hindu is reserved......Is this a sample of the Hindu Raj to come?" [*Bombay Sentinel*, 9-12-1942.] Another Indian Christian, a refugee from Burma returning to India after an absence of fifteen years, evidently a South Indian, wrote about his room hunt in Dadar and Matunga, two suburbs of Bombay inhabited mostly by Madrasi Hindus: "Many flats were to be let ....Yes, there were many rooms, but not for me, because I was not a Hindu. The reply was always the same: 'No, not for Christians and Muhammadans.' It was humiliating; it was a personal insult........If this is the soul of India, has she any hope of salvation?........Many of us come here with high ideas of patriotism, nationalism and so on; but this sort of treatment and experience is enough to kill the most ardent enthusiasm. Is there no remedy?" [*Bombay Sentinel*, 28-8-1942.] Alas, there seems to be none, even though thoughtful Hindus themselves see how their caste feeling alienates the Muslims and others and thus vitiates Indian politics. Thus Pandit Sunderlal, known as the 'saint Congressman' of the United Provinces, speaking in Bombay during the 'Congress Week' in 1941, said: "The differences between the two communities seem to stand as an insurmountable

obstacle in the path of India's freedom. The truth may be unpalatable to you, but it must be admitted that the Hindus themselves are responsible for the cry of Pakistan raised by the Muslims...... ....It is the Hindus who started Pakistan. You have Pakistan in each Hindu household. If a non-Hindu comes to your house for water, you refuse to give him your vessel. But for this attitude, the cry of Pakistan would never have beeen heard." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 10-4-1941.]

This 'untouchablity' and exclusiveness in the matter of tenements is as rampant in the cosmopolitan city of Bombay as in any part of the country. In Matunga we have actually a Madrasi Brahman street called 'Brahmanwada Road'. A high officer in the Education Department, a refined and cultured Muslim graduate of a British University, occupying a flat at Chowpatty, received notice to quit as soon as a rich Gujarati purchased the house about a couple of years ago. When such is the plight of Christians and Muslims who are for ordinary purposes 'touchable,' at least ostensibly, naturally the Untouchables can find no room in houses owned by high caste Hindus, especially Gujaratis. Here is a typical case as reported in a Bombay Congress paper: "An ejectment suit filed against Mr. T. H. Sonavane, B.A.,LL.B.,—seeking to eject him from premises occupied by him at Naigaum Cross Road, Dadar,—by Mr. Devidas Madhavji Thackersey and another, landlords, came up for hearing before the Vacation Judge Small Causes Court, [Bombay,] yesterday........The defendant submitted that the plaintiffs sought to eject him because he was a Harijan (a Ḍhor)........ Plaintiffs' advocate........handed over to the Judge a petition signed by other tenants asking for the tenant's ejection......The Judge passed orders of ejectment." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 1-6-1939.] It was just about this time that a grand conference of 'Harijan Uplifters' was held at Poona and inaugurated by the Premier of the Congress Government then in power, who said among other things that "untouchability was practically dead" and that "in three or four years it would certainly disappear." [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 7-6-1939.] Commenting on the ejectment in Bombay and the Congress Premiers' fatuously short dated prophecy at Poona, an independent Bombay paper wrote: "Mr. Sonavane passed his LL.B. examination in last November......His photograph......appeared in the *Bombay Samachar*, a paper which is read by orthodox Gujaratis. The

fact not known so far that this able young man is an Untouchable became known owing to this publicity, and he received a notice to vacate the room occupied by him in Madhav Wadi at Naigaum Cross Road." [It is specially worth noting here that according to this paper Mr. Sonavane's tenement was actually kept in a cleaner condition than those of several high caste co-tenants.] " But......the whole Thackersey Wadi was shaken to its foundation on learning that he was an Untouchable ! We have not heard or read that the Gandhian ' Harijan Uplifters ' of Bombay have made any protest against this act......We make a present of this incident that has taken place in an advanced and civilised city like Bombay to those ' Harijan Uplifters ' who are busy congratulating themselves upon their happy illusion that untouchability has ceased to exist except in name." [*Vividha Vritta*, 11-6-1939.] As we proceed in our inquiry we shall find that in the Bombay Province this aversion to Untouchables is strongest in Mr. Gandhi's own Gujarat and Kathiawad and among his own fellow Gujaratis, especially his fellow caste-men, who are almost to a man his devout followers and staunch Congressmen. One of his disciples, Swāmi Ānanda, has admitted in a ' foreword ' contributed by him to a book of realistic short stories of life—particularly caste life—in Gujarat that the caste consciousness so deeply rooted in the minds of Gujaratis has not at all loosened its grip in the last forty years. [*Prasthān*, Śrāvan-Āshāḍh, 1999 (June-July, 1943)]. As we proceed further in our inquiry we shall also see that Mr. Gandhi's reactionary and orthodox teaching during the last twenty-five years has played no small part in strengthening the grip of caste consciousness on the minds of his followers.

As the President of the Jāt-Pāt Toṛak Mandal (Caste-Breaking Society) has quite recently said, the " caste system is a graded untouchability " and " the very negation of democracy." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 1-2-1945.] And this caste feeling culminating ultimately in utter untouchability, ' unapproachability ' and even ' unseeability '—in South India, over and above Untouchables, there are ' Unapproachables ' and 'Unseeables ' also—is a protean spirit that turns up in a myriad shapes in unexpected connections. Untouchability is only the *ne plus ultra* of caste ; otherwise, it is the same elusive spirit of caste that is manifested in phenomena apparently so dissimilar and so fantastic as the following five : (1) The Patna correspondent of a Delhi paper describes the tussle between Mr. Śri

Krishna Sinha, Congress Premier of Bihar, and Mr. Anugraha Narayan Sinha, another Bihar Congressman. Of these two Sinhas, the Congress Premier is a Bhumihar Brahman, while the other is a Rajput. The correspondent avers that the Rajput Congressman has now the backing of Mr. Gandhi, and consequently the Brahman Congress Premier has resigned from the Executive Committee of the Bihar Provincial Kasturba Fund and gone to Wardha to lay his complaint before the Mahatma. The point of the story lies in what the correspondent adds : " It is also a tussle between the two castes to which the respective parties [*i.e.*, the two Sinhas] belong ......Their parties are also divided on the same lines." [*Sunday Dawn*, 25-2-1945]. (2) " It was lucky that the Conjeevaram temple dispute regarding the caste mark of the elephant belonging to this Vaishnavite temple did not lead to riots. There have been long feuds [about caste marks] in the past between Vaishnavas and Śaivas, and between sects among the Vaishnavas themselves. And scriptural texts are still quoted which say that persons not bearing certain caste marks are as bad as Chanḍālas." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 6-2-1942]. (3) " It is reported that at Uttapalam (in Malabar) an Ezhava by caste named Sivaraman, aged 17, went to the shop of a caste Hindu to buy salt and asked in the Malayalam language for 'uppu.' In Malabar, according to custom, caste Hindus alone can use the word 'uppu' for salt; being only a 'Harijan' he ought to have used the word 'pulichatan.' Consequently, the high caste grocer was very angry and is alleged to have thrashed Sivaraman so severely that the latter died." [*Bombay Samachar*, 4-11-1936]. (4) " In Kuladi, a village of Calicut, the child of a young woman fell into a well. The woman raised an alarm but none present dared to go down the well. A stranger who was passing by jumped into the well and rescued the child. Later when the people asked the benefactor who he was he said he was an Untouchable. Thereupon, instead of being thanked, the man was foully abused and assaulted as he had polluted the well." [*Bombay Samachar*, 19-12-1936]. (5) " To what extent the evil of untouchability is eating into the vitals of Hindu Society may be seen from the report published elsewhere of a case of brutal murder, which has just been disposed of by the Allahabad High Court. For his 'crime' of trying to uplift his fellowmen of the Depressed Classes, a Brahmin was brutally done to death, in the presence of his wife, by a party of 'orthodox' Brahmins." [*Indian National*

Herald, 30-4-1928]. After the last four manifestations of the caste spirit noted above, attested by well-known Congress papers, it is not very easy to understand the fuss made recently in American and Indian papers, and in the Central Assembly also, about a story retailed by somebody in America that a famine-stricken Brahman had died of hunger rather than eat the food of an Untouchable; there is nothing inherently impossible in the story, especially as the Smritis forbid the eating of food even seen by a Chanḍāla. It should not come quite as a shock to any one who knows India well to be told that such a heroic Brahman did really exist. In fact, from a strictly humanitarian point of view, such a Brahman could at the worst be called a harmless self-destroying lunatic compared with those caste Hindus described above who are prepared to break each other's heads for the caste marks put on the foreheads of elephants, or murderously assault an Untouchable boy for using a forbidden word for salt, or foully abuse and thrash an Untouchable hero for polluting a well by jumping into it to save a caste Hindu infant at the risk of his own life, or murder one of themselves for the 'crime' of uplifting the touchables. And the pother in the Legislative Assembly assumes even a highly ironical aspect when we see that the righteously indignant member who hotly protested against the story spread in America happens to be a leader of the Muslim League. For, in the ultimate analysis, 'Pakistan' by which the whole Muslim League religiously swears is only one of the by-products of the elusive and protean spirit of caste, as rightly declared by the 'Congress saint' of U.P., Pandit Sunderlal.

I think it is high time to take our courage in both hands and do some hard thinking and plain speaking on our major political or socio-political problems. We have shown a disturbing lack of realism in our grandiose political programmes and manifestoes in the last twenty-five years; and the 'deadlock' and 'frustration', of which we have been hearing so much any time these five years and more, are the inevitable result of this sad lack of realism that has characterised all our mass movements for a whole generation now. Mere indulgence in grand language and vague self-deluding generalisations, slogans and catch-phrases, intended to get round stark realities, can succeed only for a time in deceiving ourselves or in making the outside world believe that our grave and deep-rooted national weaknesses and handicaps do not exist or have been

sufficiently mastered to be safely neglected in future. Having first indulged for twenty years in a good deal of plain speaking about the social and religious affairs of my own very small community, and thereby earned within its narrow confines a pretty bad reputation, I started writing on problems of all India interest in 1924,—especially those which had been enveloped in a pretty thick fog of sentimental verbiage and sanctimonious smoke screens,—in my own manner of marshalling scrupulous and ample documentation so as to bring out the ironical reality smothered beneath the verbiage and high-sounding sentiments. This manner of ironical presentation seems to have hurt more than the most violent denunciation would have done, for I was not only assailed directly by some of the leading politicians and publicists,—I had the honour of crossing swords with the Ali Brothers and Mr. Gandhi among others,—a maliciously vindictive campaign was also started against me in 1930 which, however, failed ignominiously. Being thus case-hardened by past exerience I am quite cheerfully prepared for the unpleasant consequences succinctly foretold by Sir Govind Madgaonkar in his address mentioned above. I am not only indifferent to such abuse and obloquy, I know from experience that truth does after all prevail; nothing has pleased me more than the fact that many whom I have criticised have learnt to respect my plain speaking, and some have actually become my friends in private life. What is more, some of the most violent of my assailants in 1930 have begun to see the truth and to think and write since 1938-39 almost as I did fifteen to twenty years ago. I must in the end make it quite clear once more that I am not a politician, I take my cue from none as I am my own master, and I have no axe to grind in what I say in this book. In fact, had it not been for the keen interest taken in what follows by some of my friends, especially my new Congress friend, perhaps I might not have cared to publish it in book form. Nor have I any great hope that it is going to achieve any immediate practical results. As I have said above, it is in the nature of a fact finding inquiry; it is meant to place before the reading world at large facts about a subject that is as a rule seen through a highly refracting sentimental fog.

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[I have made scarcely any change in the original articles, but have added about two dozen citations to bring the matter upto date.

5th September, 1945. J.E.S.]

SENSE AND NONSENSE IN POLITICS.

BY PROF. A. R. WADIA.

It has been said that even in England and U.S.A., where democracy may be said to have functioned with conspicuous success, able and honourable people avoid the political platform where truth generally suffers at the hands of party exigencies. No wonder then if in India where democracy is still struggling to come into being, truth often gets a rather rough handling at the hands of our politicians. When one aims merely at scoring a point, disregard of truth tends to slip into mere nonsense. Recently we have had a remarkable exhibition of this tendency in the utterances of Dr. Ambedkar in Madras and elsewhere in South India, and the angry retorts they have excited even from the usually staid people like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Iyer give us food for thought and induce pessimism to an unhealthy degree.

DR. AMBEDKAR AND HIS SALVATION.

Dr. Ambedkar has been a consistently bitter critic of Hinduism and he has been virulently attacked by the Hindu press. But I have never been able to withhold from him a considerable measure of sympathy, not unmixed even with admiration. Dr. Ambedkar himself belongs to the category of the untouchables. A hundred years ago he could not have hoped to make the acquaintance of even the three R's unless he had crossed over to Christianity or Islam. With all the high education that he has had through the sagacity of the most level-headed prince that India has seen in recent times, the late Sayaji Rao Gaekwar of Baroda, he could not have dreamed of occupying a high office in any Hindu state. But his own merit and a turn in the political wheel of fortune have elevated him to the olympic heights of the Viceroy's Council. It does not require much imagination to understand that a man of his education and position would be chafing under all the thousand and one galling humiliations imposed upon his like by the ancient Sastras. One can even understand his anxiety to kick the dust of Hinduism off his feet; one can sympathise with his aspiration that he would not die a Hindu, even though he was born a Hindu. One can understand his dallying with various religious groups that

compete for his allegiance and through him of millions of his compatriots. Islam has been casting glances at him and a shrewd politician like Mr. Jinnah may be trusted to know how the accession of some 60 million untouchables to the fold of Islam would tilt the political balance to the permanent crippling of Hindus. The Sikhs at one time thought of angling Dr. Ambedkar and the Khalsa College in Bombay is said to have been a move in that direction. Buddhism has perhaps a more native charm, but it has hardly any political future in India. In the midst of all these rival baits, Dr. Ambedkar still remains a Hindu. The reason is not far to seek. The call of religion has not come to him as a religion. He is first and foremost an intellectual and a politician and he has to calculate the advantages of conversion to this or that religion not so much in terms of the next world, as in term of *now* and *here*. And he knows the difficulties of his position. The masses of the untouchables are still uneducated, sunk in age-worn superstitions and living in terror of the caste Hindus. They are still fond of hugging their chains and have no desire to bid good-bye to their old temples and their gods. Dr. Ambedkar himself knows that his own political importance is bound up with his continuance as an untouchable. As a Muslim or as a Sikh or as a Buddhist he would be one in a crowd. Once he is out of his own fold he would lose the right to be a spokesman of his oppressed fellow-beings. One can understand the dilemma to which he is exposed. That explains also his violent fulminations against Brahmins and other caste-Hindus. There is a lot of sense in what he says, but in the heat of politics his sense often degenerates into nonsense.

ABSURD CHARGE AGAINST GANDHIJI.

So long as popular Hinduism insists on holding on to caste as its pivot, there is no hope for the untouchables, and not even for India generally. To this extent Dr. Ambedkar's diatribe against Hindus and Hinduism is perfectly justifiable, however unpleasant and unwelcome it may be to Indian politicians who are out to give a short shrift to the foreign dominance in India. Gandhiji himself in spite of his reputed hold on the masses has himself come in for hard knocks from the hundred per cent. sanatanists, and technically according to Sanatanist dictionary he himself is an untouchable! For this very reason it is not merely ungracious on the part of Dr. Ambedkar but false, to repudiate the memorable service that

Gandhiji has rendered to the cause of the untouchables. If it were possible to calculate with mathematical exactness such a subtle force as human sympathy and influence, Gandhiji's work for the untouchables has been of a far more enduring character than the work of Dr. Ambedkar himself. It is open to Dr. Ambedkar to differ from Gandhiji in the modes of serving the untouchables, but to stigmatise Gandhiji as the greatest enemy of the untouchables is to cross all bounds of even political indecency, and to be guilty not merely of nonsense but of nonsense to the $n^{th.}$ degree.

One may condemn all the atrocities of European Christians in all the nooks and corners of the world. But it would be nonsense to pillory Christ himself for all the sins of his so-called followers. Similarly, a scholar like Dr. Ambedkar may justifiably thunder against caste and the Dharmasastras which have codified all the injustices of the caste system, but when he proceeds to stigmatise the Vedas and the Gita as " nonsense " he lays himself open to the charge of speaking arrant nonsense. In the Vedas we have no trace of that soulless caste system which has come to be identified with Hinduism during the last 2000 years. And in the Gita there is the possibility of interpreting caste on the basis of *gunas* or the qualities of the soul rather than on the basis of mere birth. Surely, Dr. Ambedkar is not unaware of the stupidity of throwing out the baby along with the bath water in the tub, and yet this is just what he tried to do in Madras last month.

MYTH OF HARIJANSTAN.

In sober politics he is justified in his fear of the caste Hindus, and is entitled to plead for, and even fight for, safeguards. But sober politics lapses into nonsense when he trots out the scheduled castes as a nation. If such a claim in the case of the Muslims is bad philology and worse politics, in the case of the scheduled castes it is pure nonsense and not the greatest political genius can hope to have a Harijanstan, for they are hopelessly scattered all over India, and unlike the Muslims, in not a single province, are they in a majority.

In the heat of party politics Dr. Ambedkar has allowed himself to be lost in misty words and lost a core of sound sense in the mountain of nonsense of his own creation. And even in politics neither nonsense nor falsehood can ever hope to pay in the long run.

If Dr. Ambedkar has blundered, we may take a charitable view and put it down to the political immaturity and the newness of his cause but this excuse does not exist in the case of veteran politicians like Sir C. P. Ramasamy Iyer. He cannot hope to gag Dr. Ambedkar as a servant of the Crown from speaking against caste Hindus when other servants of the Crown in the Viceroy's Council are feasted and feted to speak against Pakistan. And to seek to organise the Hindus against Dr. Ambedkar is to reduce to nonsense all the wealth and intellect of caste Hindus, which have created even without any organisation such a terror in the minorities as to give rise to dreams of Pakistan and Dravidistan. It is not good politics nor even sound common sense for caste Hindus to develop temper against Mr. Jinnah or Dr. Ambedkar. It is far more essential for them as an overwhelming majority to develop a conciliatory spirit which could induce faith and win the confidence of minorities. Temper on their part would only prove that they mean to stick tightly to all their old privileges, and such an attitude can only mean that it is perhaps best to leave things as they are in India. This may maintain caste supremacy to the heart's delight of orthodox Hindu leaders, but it would certainly also mean the perpetuation of India's political dependence and the grinding poverty of her masses.

I

"SENSE AND NONSENSE IN POLITICS."

Professor A. R. Wadia's interesting article under this caption in the last issue of the *Rast Rahbar*—(I think it has appeared in a South India paper also)—is admirable in tone and temper, but I think it errs in the matter of some vital facts, and the Professor's *ex cathedra* judgments are faulty as they are based on insufficient evidence and information. I hold no brief for Dr. Ambedkar, but I honestly believe that the Professor is less than just to the Doctor when he avers offhand that " his political importance is bound up with his continuance as an Untouchable. As a Muslim or as a Sikh......he would be one in a crowd." I have met a good few front rank Hindu and Muslim leaders, of the Congress, Hindu Sabha and other varieties ; I have also known most of these leaders fairly well for the last twenty-five years through their public utterances and writings and actions. And the least I can say is that Dr. Ambedkar is certainly not inferior to any of them in intellectual calibre or personality ; in fact, he is superior to most of them. I may also remind Professor Wadia that public leadership rarely depends on high qualities of ' head and heart ' ; as we know from experience it depends more often than not on push, diplomacy (*i.e.*, duplicity), self-advertisement, time-serving and, of course, an amount of luck. Still, given the luck, Dr. Ambedkar would have come to the top as a Brahman or a Bania, as a Muslim or a Sikh, by his undoubted merits alone.

Leaving this personal aspect of the matter aside, I think Professor Wadia is even more unjust to Dr. Ambedkar in his zeal to defend Mr. Gandhi as the supreme saviour and champion of the Untouchables, against the embittered attacks and accusations of the Doctor. The Professor seems to believe that Mr. Gandhi has earned the hatred of the orthodox 'Sanatani' Hindus, whose Hinduism " holds on to caste as its pivot," because the Mahatma himself has disowned this ' popular Hinduism ' and refused to " hold on to caste as its pivot." He also seems to believe that the Vedas and Gita do not teach caste. As mere assertions or denials of such beliefs are neither here nor there, we shall try to ascertain

whether hard facts and documentary proofs support such assertions or denials.

Let us first consider a few facts about Mr. Gandhi's movement for Harijan 'uplift.' To begin with a very recent personal experience, less than two weeks ago I had a very long 'heart to heart' talk with a front rank Congress leader of all-India fame. I was naturally gratified to learn from him that he, and a still more eminent Congress leader, had read with interest and admiration my recent articles in the *Bombay Chronicle* on the subject of Untouchability and Caste; and this Congress leader admitted incidentally that the Congress movement for the 'uplift' of Harijans was at bottom definitely "a political movement." And any dispassionate outsider who has closely scrutinised the Congress 'uplift' of Harijans and carefully studied Mr. Gandhi's writings on the subject—especially his Gujarati writings—and who has gone into the history of the 'Poona Pact' and the preliminary coercive fast, must come to this conclusion. But as I have already said, mere opinions are neither here nor there; we must adduce ascertained facts and credible evidence to support them.

At a dinner given in Bombay to Dr. N. B. Khare of Nagpur, ex-Congress Premier of C.P., on 4-8-1938, Dr. Ambedkar who presided said in his speech that Dr. Khare had created a sensation in the Congress by appointing an Untouchable as a Minister. In his reply the guest of the evening said that Mr. Gandhi had expressed disapproval of thus "raising absurd ambitions" in the minds of Harijans. [*Vividha Vritta*, 14-8-1938]. The paper repeated the story again six years later. [*Vividha Vritta*, 8-10-1944]. Whether this be a true story or not,—though perfectly true it is now denied by an immediate disciple of Mr. Gandhi,—such disapproval, as we shall see later on, is fully in keeping with the Mahatmic teaching on the subject of caste. I would also ask Professor Wadia to read the astringent strictures of the 'Recluse' (*i.e.*, I suppose, Mr. K. Natarajan) on the quite recent refusal by Mr. Gandhi to have any Harijan on the executive of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. [*Indian Social Reformer*, 14-10-1944].

Next I would refer the Professor to the very well-known history of the inner working of the Second Round Table Conference, which I must have seen published a dozen times in the last one dozen years, without even once being authoritatively contradicted. I take the following account of it from the latest extract

in my notebooks. The address presented to Dr. Ambedkar at Calcutta, on 25-8-1944, by the Scheduled Castes Federation, (when the Hon. Mr. Mondal, Bengal Minister, presided), said among other things: "In the Second Round Table Conference, the Muslims signed a Minorities Pact with the Depressed Classes and the Christians. Mr. Gandhi opposed it tooth and nail, and even offered to accept the Fourteen Points of Mr. Jinnah, provided the Muslims opposed the demands of the Depressed Classes for separate electrorates; but it stands to the credit of the great Muslim community that they refused to betray the Depressed Classes and go back upon their signature." [*Sunday Obserer*, 10-9-1944.]

And the natural result of this Satanic firmness on the part of Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Ambedkar was the famous (or infamous) coercive fast that resulted, with Dr. Ambedkar's coerced consent, in the Poona Pact,—a sentimental blunder for which Dr. Ambedkar has never forgiven himself, and which accounts for much of his bitterness in recent years, in as much as the Pact has, in effect, delivered the Untouchables, bound hand and foot, into the hands of Caste Hindus, as my next citation will show. This citation is from an unimpeachable source, from a Depressed Class leader who had always opposed Dr. Ambedkar and had believed in the Mahatma, and who had always banked on Congress support for the real 'uplift' of his people,— I am sure even Professor Wadia can not call this source tainted or biased,—I mean the late Mr. M.C. Rajah, M.L.A., of Madras. When Mr. Rajah was invited to a No-Party Conference proposed to be called by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru late in 1942, he wrote in a heart-rending letter refusing to attend a Conference to which the Deputy Mahatma Rajaji also had been invited: "My experience of co-operation with leaders of other parties and communities has been to prove that while these leaders hope to achieve some object of their own by securing our co-operation, they leave us finally in the lurch and even set back the progress of the [Untouchable] community. For instance we co-operated in 1932 with Hindu leaders like yourself and Pandit Malaviya in rescuing Mr. Gandhi from his threatened self-immolation by sacrificing our own political interest and agreeing to forgo the Separate Electorate provided for us by the British Government, and to go into a Joint Electorate with Caste Hindus. This brought about what is called the Poona Pact. What has been the result? Congress, dominated by Caste Hindus, did not respect our right

to elect through a panel men who truly represented the wishes of our community; but on the other hand, invited men of our community to join the Congress, promising them support of the Caste Hindu majority. This naturally weakened and broke up our own political organisation and made our men the camp-followers of the Congress. This was pointed out at the time to Mr. Gandhi ......, and later on when 28 men of our community out of 30 in the Madras Legislative Assembly walked, brushing aside their own judgment and convictions, into the lobby, under orders in the guise of party discipline from the Premier *to vote against the Madras Temple Entry Bill* introduced by me, *though I introduced it with the consent and promised support of the Congress Premier.* And what was Mr. Gandhi's reply? He replied, 'Trust C. Rajagopalachari. *Your community has no better friend than he'*......I enclose copies of the correspondence which passed between Mr. Gandhi and myself, telling the sad story of the betrayal of the Depressed Classes." [*Dawn*, 26-12-1942. Italics are mine.]

In a speech delivered at Madras on 12-11-1941, Mr. Rajah said: "I expected the Congress Government would whole-heartedly support my Temple Entry Bill *which the Premier himself had drafted for me*......My Bill was torpedoed." [*Sunday Observer*, 16-11-1941.] The Italics are mine, but I can find no suitable epithet for this supreme Congress feat of Harijan 'Uplift.' I leave it to Professor Wadia to cross the t's and dot the i's in this sad and bad story of vile betrayal, and especially the typically Mahatmic reply. I will only add that poor Rajah died a little later a disillusioned, embittered and broken-hearted man.

The light thrown on this Bill by the Bombay social reform paper is still more revealing: "This [Temple Entry] Bill [of 1938] is identical with the one drafted by Dr. Subbaroyan, Minister for Education in the Madras Cabinet, six years ago......Mr. Rajah, then a member of the Indian Legislative Council, took charge of it and was *actively and even enthusiastically helped by Mr. C. Rajagopalachari*......That was six years ago......*But Mr. C.R., who was keen on getting the Bill passed six years ago*, with a view, as he candidly avows, of giving as much trouble as possible to the Government of the day, *now opposes the same Bill* because he, as Prime Minister, will have to shoulder the responsibility of giving effect to it." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 27-8-1938.]

So much for the modern Saviour of Untouchables and his chief Apostle, and Anti-Christ Ambedkar. I shall next deal with Professor Wadia's gallant but slapdash defence of the Vedas and Gita, against Dr. Ambedkar, and his surprisingly inaccurate reading of Mr. Gandhi's own views on caste and the Gita.

II

MAHATMIC TEACHING ON CASTE.

In his interesting and ingenuous defence of the Mahatma, the Vedas and the Gita, Professor Wadia says: "So long as popular Hinduism insists on holding on to caste as its pivot, there is no hope for the Untouchables, and not even for India generally." That is sound *modern* doctrine; for undoubtedly the Untouchable, the outcaste, is the inevitable concomitant of caste by birth. But when the Professor implies that Mr. Gandhi does not 'hold on' to this 'pivot' of 'popular Hinduism', namely, caste by birth, and that, therefore, the Mahatma has "come in for hard knocks from the hundred per cent. Sanatanists," he betrays, I fear, unpardonable ignorance of the Mahatmic teaching on the subject of caste—which, by the way, is substantially the teaching of the Vedas and the Gita also. As I have repeatedly pointed out in print, and proved again and again by citing chapter and verse from Mr. Gandhi's own writings, the Mahatma devoutly believes in caste by birth,—a sound orthodox Hindu doctrine,—and therefore rightly claims to be a Sanatanist Hindu: હું મને પોતાને સનાતની હિંદુ કહેવડાવું છું. *i.e.*, "I call myself a Sanatani Hindu." ['Dharma-Manthana,' p. 4]. And he then proceeds to state carefully and categorically, and to defend, the cardinal beliefs of Sanatani Hindus, namely, faith in the Hindu scriptures, in the Avatars, in reincarnation, in caste by birth, in the inviolate and inviolable sacredness of the cow, and in idolatry. [*Ibid.*, pp. 4, 5, 7, 11, 13].

As, unfortunately, people's memories are short in such matters, especially when befogged by deliberate smoke-screen propaganda, I must here once more place before the forgetful public the gist of the Mahatmic teaching on caste. Mr. Gandhi writes: હું જન્મસિદ્ધ વર્ણવિભાગમાં માનું છું, i.e., "I believe in caste division determined by birth." ['Varṇa-Vyavasthā,' p. 76]. And he again writes વર્ણવિભાગના મૂળમાંજ જન્મ છે, i.e., "at the very root of caste division lies birth." [Ibid. p. 77.] Further, વર્ણાશ્રમ.. એ જન્મથીજ પ્રાપ્ત થનારી વસ્તુ છે, i.e., "The (four) castes and the (four) stages of life are things to be attained by birth alone." "['Dharma-Manthana', p. 5]. And, જે વર્ણાશ્રમ ને ગોરક્ષાને માને

તે હિંદુ છે, i.e. "he is a Hindu who believes in caste *plus* ashram and cow-protection." [Ibid., p. 20]. He also says, વર્ણ જન્મથી છે, એવી મારી માન્યતા છે, i.e., "I believe that caste is by birth." [p. 24]. As for a Bania like himslef being called or becoming a Brahman or a Kshatriya, he says: બીજે ભવે ભલે બ્રાહ્મણ કે ક્ષત્રિય જન્મે i.e., "he may very well be born a Brahman or a Kshatriya in another birth," but he cannot call himself one in this life even if his qualities and actions be those of a Brahman or a Kshatriya [p. 24]. When pointedly asked, "cannot a Śūdra, who has the qualities of a Brahman, be called a Brahman?" his emphatic reply was: તે આ જન્મે બ્રાહ્મણ ન કહેવાય, i.e., "in this life he cannot be called a Brahman." ['V.—V', p. 34]. Not only does Mr. Gandhi firmly and religiously believe in the caste system based on birth, he confidently prophesies that the whole world must and will come to believe in and practise it: આજ નહિ તો કાલે પણ તે [વર્ણાશ્રમ] જગતને સ્વીકાર્યે જ છુટકો છે, i.e., "if not today, the world cannot but adopt it tomorrow." [Ibid, p. 13]; and, મારો વિશ્વાસ વધતો જાય છે કે વર્ણધર્મથી જ જગતનો ઉદ્ધાર થશે, *i.e.*, "my faith is growing that the caste system alone can save the world." [p. 81]. Whether the world adopts the creed of caste by birth or not, Mr. Gandhi is perfectly right when he posits caste by birth as a cardinal and 'pivotal' doctrine, not only of 'popular' Hindusim, but, as we shall see later on, also of true Hinduism, of scriptural and historical Hinduism.

Another dogma of Hinduism which is implicit in that of caste by birth and indissolubly bound up with it, and which Mr. Gandhi never wearies of preaching, is that of hereditary vocations; again and again he emphasises the religious duty of a man to stick to the profession of his ancestors. He writes: વર્ણ એટલે માણસના ધંધાની પસંદગીનો પૂર્વનિર્ણય, મનુષ્ય પોતાની આજીવિકા મેળવવા માટે બાપદાદાનો જ ધંધો કરે એનું નામ વર્ણધર્મ, *i.e.*, "Caste means the pre-determination of a man's profession. Caste implies that a man must practise only the profession of his ancestors for his livelihood." ['V.-V.', p. 28]. Mr. Gandhi calls this the natural law of heredity and compares it with Newton's law of gravitation [p. 28]. He reiterates the same dogma on p. 54, calls a man's paternal profession ઇશ્વરે નિર્મેલું કર્તવ્ય, *i.e.*, "duty created (for him) by God", and says: બાપનો ધંધો કરવો એ જ એને માટે ઉત્તમ માર્ગ છે, *i.e.*, "The only best way for him is to follow the profession of his father." Again, વર્ણને આજીવિકાના ધંધાની સાથે નિકટ સંબંધ છે. સૌનો ધંધો

તેનો સ્વધર્મ છે, *i.e.*, "caste has a close connection with the profession for livelihood, it is the religious duty of every man to follow his own (inherited) profession." [p. 68]. As this is a sacred, God-ordained, religious duty, naturally a man sins, 'falls,' if he gives up this inherited life work. Now the duty of a Śūdra is to serve the higher castes. And, therefore, શૂદ્ર સેવા છોડે એટલે તેનું પતન થયું, *i.e.*, "the Śūdra who gives up service (of the higher castes) is fallen," [p. 68]. Of course, when this God-ordained caste system was scrupulously and rightly practised, in some "Satyug of the Hindu religion" [p. 74], there was absolutely no feeling of high and low as between caste and caste, or between profession and profession; for under the Divine law of caste, બધા ધંધા પ્રતિષ્ઠામાં ને કિંમતમાં એક-સરખા ગણાય, વજીર,વકીલ, દાક્તર, ચમાર, સુતાર, ભંગી અને બ્રાહ્મણ એકસરખું કમાય, *i.e.*, "all professions would be considered equal in status and (money) value; minister, lawyer, doctor, merchant, cobbler, carpenter, scavenger and Brahman would all earn equal wages." [p. 14]. Only, the Chamars (cobblers) must remain Chamars, the Bhangis (scavengers) must remain Bhangis, from father to son, for all time to come, so that this grand law of nature, this God-ordained caste system, may smoothly function for the eternal good of all mankind.

I hope this succinct exposition of the grand Mahatmic Gospel of Caste, which is going to save the Satanic West blinded by rank materialism, will make it clear as daylight how preposterous, sacrilegious and disastrous, how diametrically opposed to this God-given law of Nature was the proposal to make an Untouchable a Congress minister, and how grossly Dr. Ambedkar has sinned, 'fallen,' in going and becoming a Barrister-at-Law, and a Ph.D., and worse still, a Member of the Viceroy's Council, instead of following his God-given ancestral profession of humbly serving—at a proper distance—his natural and God-appointed masters, the Banias and Brahmans of his native village. He has thus not only 'fallen' and endangered his own salvation, he has also lost the divine reward promised by the Mahatma: જે શૂદ્ર કેવળ ધર્મ સમજીને પરિ-ચર્યાજ કરેછે, અને જેની પાસે મિલકત કદી હોવાનીજ નથી, અને જેને માલિક થવાનો લોભ સરખોયે નથી, એ હજારો વંદનાને લાયક છે,..દેવતાઓ તો તેની પર ફૂલોનો વરસાદ વરસાવશે. *i.e.*, "the Śūdra who only serves (the higher castes) as a matter of religious duty, and who will never own any property, who indeed has not even the ambition to own anything, is deserving of a thou-

sand obeisances......The very gods will shower down flowers on him." [V.-V., p. 15]. Whether the promised celestial flowers be real or only a Mahatmic flowery flourish, the Doctor has undoubtedly sinned against the God-ordained Law of Karma and caste by birth, not only according to the Mahatmic teaching, but also, as we shall next see, according to the strictly canonical teaching of Śruti and Smriti, Revelation and Law, and also of the Gita,—*pace* Professor Wadia.

III

VEDAS AND GITA ON CASTE.

In his defence of the Vedas and the Gita, Professor Wadia writes : " In the Vedas we have no trace of that soulless caste system which has come to be identified with Hinduism during the last 2,000 years. And in the Gita there is the possibility of interpreting caste on the basis of *gunas* or qualities of the soul rather than on the basis of mere birth." We must not forget when considering these *ex cathedra* pronouncements that the term Vedas is used, east and west, in two distinct senses. Western orientalists restrict the word only to the four 'Samhitās' or compilations of hymns, the Rigveda, Yajurveda &c. But authoritative Indian tradition has always included in the term 'Śruti' or 'Revelation', which is equivalent to 'Vedas', not only these Samhitās but also the numerous and extensive prose treatises called 'Brāhmaṇas' of which the best known are the Aitareya and the Śatapatha. And, finally, the orthodox canon of Hindu revealed scriptures is rounded off by the numerous, prose and verse, philosophical and quasi-philosophical disquisitions called 'Upanishads' of which eleven (or twelve) are accepted all round as the most authoritative, and which constitute the consummation, the 'End', of the Vedas,—'Vedānta.'

Bearing these preliminary distinctions in mind let us examine Professor Wadia's sweeping assertion about the Vedas and the Gita. To begin at the beginning, the very *fons et origo* of the four caste system is found in the famous and (as V. S. Apte calls it) 'very sacred' hymn known as the 'Purusha Sūkta'—the 90th hymn in the Tenth Book of the Rigveda. It describes cosmic creation from 'Purusha', the Cosmic Person, and declares that the Brahman was created from His mouth, the Rājanya (*i.e.*, Kshatriya) from His arms, the Vaiśya from His thighs, and the Śūdra from His feet. Professor Wadia sees 'no trace' of the caste system in the Vedas. Surely here we have much more than a mere trace of it; in fact, it is the full-fledged four caste system with its social inequalities already clearly indicated in the identification of the highest, the Brahman, with the head, the 'uttamānga' (' the best limb '), and of the lowest, the Śūdra, with the feet, the 'adhamānga' (' the vilest limb '), of the Divine Purusha. And wherever the Śūdra is

mentioned in the Rig and other Vedas we are not left in any doubt about his degraded and depressed social status. He is hated and despised as a non-Aryan, as the natural black opponent of the noble white Aryans. In the Aitareya Brāhmana (VII. 29. 4) he is 'yathā-kāmavadhya' (to-be-killed-at-will'), in the Panchavimśa Brāhmaṇa (VI. 1.11) he is 'ayajnīya' ('unfit for sacrifice'). ['Vedic Index,' II, pp. 389-90]. Coming lower down still in the scale of caste, we find the Chaṇḍāla, a 'despised caste,' or outcaste, for, says the 'Vedic Index': "The references to the caste in the Yajurveda Samhitas show that it was a degraded one." [I, pp. 253-54]. The Vrishala, again, in Rigveda X. 34.11 "denotes an outcast; the same sense appears in Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad (VI. 4.12), where the touch of a Vrishala or Vrishali is to be avoided." [Ibid., II. p. 27.]

But for the rationale of high and low in caste, and of untouchability, we have to go to the 'Consummation of the Vedas,' the Upanishads. As I have pointed out repeatedly since I first wrote at some length on the subject nearly forty years ago , 'karma,' *i.e.*, good or evil action in a past life as the plausible explanation of apparent inequalities in the present life, makes its first appearance in a fairly systematized form in the older Upanishads; and the *locus classicus* which gives the rationale of caste inequalities is the famous passage in the Chhāndogya Upanishad (V. 10.7) which runs: "Those whose actions here have been good will quickly attain some good birth, the birth of a Brahman, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaiśya. And those whose actions have been evil will quickly attain an evil birth, the birth of a dog, or a hog, or a Chaṇḍāla." It should be noted in passing that the categories in both cases are in a descending order,—as the Vaiśya is lower than Brahman or Kshatriya, so the Chaṇḍāla is lower than dog or hog. Thus caste, with its inseparable concomitant the outcaste, is the inevitable concomitant of the belief in 'karma' and reincarnation.

So much for undoubtedly Vedic warrant for caste by birth and its inherent inequalities. Now for the "possibility (in the Gita)", alleged by Professor Wadia, "of interpreting caste on the basis of *gunas* or qualities of the soul rather than on the basis of mere birth." It must not be forgotten—as it so often is—that the Gita is not an independent work by itself; it only forms part of a far greater whole, the epic Mahabharata. And the atmosphere

of this vast background of the Gita is through and through saturated with the caste idea. To speak nothing of disquisitions on the possibility of rising to higher castes only by way of rebirth, some of the most important figures in the epic story prove conclusively that the idea of caste by birth was of the highest social import in this epic milieu. For instance, Karṇa, although as great a master of arms and warlike arts as Arjuna himself, is never allowed to forget that he belongs (at least in the eyes of the world) to the Sūta (charioteer) caste, and not to the noble Kshatriya one. The wise, unworldly and saintly Vidura, judged by *guṇas* (or qualities) alone, is certainly a Brahman; but though a half-brother of the Royal protagonists, he is always called a 'Kshattā' and even a Śūdra because he is born of a slave girl. The generalissimo of the Kauravas, Droṇa, and his son Aśvatthāman, and the latter's maternal uncle Kripa, are all by bent and choice and profession great warriors and mighty bowmen; but not for a moment do they forget, or are they allowed to forget, that by birth, and therefore in reality, they are Brahmans.

And coming to the text of the Gita itself, it is really surprising that any one going through it with an open mind could come to the conclusion that it traverses and expunges the trend and teaching of the Vedas and Upanishads, and also of the rest of the epic itself, and teaches 'caste by qualities or merits,' and not by birth. The very motif of the Gita is to make Arjuna realise that as by birth he is a warrior it is not for him to question or shirk his inherited and innate caste duty to fight. Verses I. 41 and 43 are again decisive: the former says, "if women be polluted there would be 'varṇa-samkara' (*i.e.*, caste mixture),"—which unmistakably bases caste on birth; and the latter goes further and speaks of 'jāti-dharmas', *i.e.*, duties of 'caste-by-birth.' Verse XVIII. 41 definitely teaches that the duties of the four castes are 'svabhāva-prabhava', *i.e.*, born of *innate* qualities, and are significantly called their 'karma'. Verse 48 later on again teaches that 'sahajaṃ karma', that is, 'duty born with one,' must not be given up though 'objectionable' (sadosham); and it is exactly this Gita teaching that is pleaded by the fisherman in the Śākuntala (Act VI, 1) when he defends his humble profession as being his 'sahajam karma.' But if there were any the least ground for doubt as to the teaching of the Gita on this point, it should be finally removed by the verses IX. 32 and 33, where Brahmans and

princely saints are called 'puṇyāh', *i.e.*, of 'holy birth,' in contrast with such persons of 'sinful birth', (pāpa-yonayah), as "women, Vaiśyas and Śūdras." A score of other verses in the Gita could be cited to support this teaching of caste by birth.

In a learned article on the subject of caste by birth, Professor A. S. Altekar (of Benares University) refers to the age of the Epic and the Gita and rightly says: "It will be seen that in the time of the Gita, in actual practice the caste system was based on the principle of birth only." As for the general belief in the Epic period, he quotes two verses from the Mahabharata, (Book XIII Chap. 3, Vs. 6-7), in which it is definitely laid down that it is very difficult to be born a Brahman, and that only after passing through many incarnations and after being born again and again, a person can, only when the proper turn comes, be born as a Brahman. The Professor also cites Rigveda VIII. 35. 16, 17, 18, and II. 43. 2 to show that even as early as the Rigdevic age caste was regarded as a matter of birth. [*Sahyādri*, June, 1935].

The only two Gita verses that have been brought forward as somehow supporting the distinctly modern idea of 'caste according to qualities,' are चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं etc. (IV. 13), and विद्याविनयसंपन्ने etc. (V. 18). On the first, I shall content myself with quoting Mr. Gandhi's own commentary, which I trust Professor Wadia will accept as authoritative: વર્ણ ગુણકર્મને અનુસરે છે એમ ગીતા કહે છે ખરી પણ ગુણકર્મ જન્મત: વારસામાં મળે છે. ભગવાન કૃષ્ણે કહ્યું છે કે ચારે વર્ણો મેં સરજ્યા છે—चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टम् એમાંથી હું 'જન્મત:' એ અર્થ કાઢું છું. વર્ણધર્મ જન્મત: ન હોય તો એનો કશો અર્થ નથી, *i.e.*, "the Gita does say no doubt that caste depends on qualities and karma, but qualities and karma are obtained by birth through heredity. Bhagavan Krishna has said, 'all the four castes have been created by me'—'chāturvarṇyam mayā srishṭam.' From this I deduce the meaning 'by birth.' If caste were not by birth, it would be meaningless." ['Varṇa-Vyavasthā,' p. 36]. And this is perfectly true; one has only to state the problem of adjudicating the caste of every person according to that person's qualities and tendencies, to realise the absurdity and impossibility of such a hopelessly stupendous task.

As for verse V, 18, it literally means: "The adepts (*i.e.*, those who have attained perfect knowledge) regard as equal the Brahman possessed of learning and discipline, the bull, the elephant, the dog, and the dog-eater (*i.e.*, the Untouchable)." This, as the next

preceding verse shows, depicts the mental equilibrium gained by those perfected souls for whom " there is no return," *i.e.*, who have attained ' mukti ' (final salvation), and who, as the next succeeding verse says, " have conquered all creation," having reached the final goal, attained the noumenal Reality. This passionless, changeless, noumenal state of mind has nothing to do with the activities (vyavahāra) of ordinary mortals in this phenomenal world, in which the dog-eater is even lower than the dog. And, as we have seen, any such modern interpretation of this verse as would place the Brahman and the Untouchable on the same social level in the *actual* world would contradict the teaching of ' puṇyayoni ' and ' pāpa-yoni,'—of ' holy birth ' and ' sinful birth,'—in fact, the unanimous concurrent teaching of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita itself. Even Mr. Gandhi who, in order to square the radically undemocratic caste system with modern ideas of democracy, desperately pretends that there was originally, " in some Golden Age of Hinduism," no social or any other inequality between caste and caste —that the Brahman, the Bania and the Bhangi stood shoulder to shoulder on exactly the same social and economic level,—can not completely stifle his inherited and almost instinctive caste notions, and he more than once gives the brave show away, revealing a glimpse of the real teaching of historical Hinduism. When asked if there was any idea of high or low in the caste system, his reply was : ના, જરાયે નહિ. જો કે હું અવશ્ય કહું કે બ્રાહ્મણ વર્ણ એ બીજા વર્ણોની પરાકાષ્ઠા છે, જેમ માથું એ શરીરની પરાકાષ્ઠા છે, i. e., " No, none at all; though I would certainly say that the Brahman caste is the extreme (or, highest) limit of all other castes, (just) as the head is the highest limit of the body." ['V.-V.', p. 36], That, in effect, is exactly the teaching of the ' Purusha ' hymn, as also of scores of Śruti and Smriti texts. Even more revealing is the following remarkable justification of caste by birth as a law of nature : જો હીંદુઓ પુનર્જન્મને માનનારા છે-અને દરેક હિંદુ પુનર્જન્મને માનનારો હોવોજ જોઈએ-તો તેઓએ એમજ માનવું રહ્યું કે કુદરત કશી પણ ભૂલ કર્યા વગર દુર્વર્તન કરનાર બ્રાહ્મણને માનવી ઉન્નતિની કોટિમાં નીચલી પાયરીએ નાખશે, અને તેજ રીતે આ જન્મમાં બ્રાહ્મણ જીવન ગાળનારને બ્રાહ્મણ કોટિમાં ચડાવ્યા વગર પણ નહિ રહે, *i.e.*, " If Hindus believe in reincarnation—and every Hindu needs must be a believer in reincarnation—they needs must believe that Nature will unerringly throw a Brahman, who acts evilly, down on a lower rung in the scale of human evolution,

and in just the same manner it [Nature] cannot but elevate [a non-Brahman], who lives the life of a Brahman in this birth, to the Brahman class." [' Dharma-Manthana,' p. 32]. Thus the wicked Brahman will be reborn on a *lower* rung in the social scale ; and the pious non-Brahman will *rise* to the Brahman caste, the ' parākāshṭhā '—' the *highest* limit '—of all the castes. Here unwittingly speaks—quite in accordance with the real teaching of the Vedas and the Gita—the true-blue ' Sanatani ' Hindu in Mr. Gandhi who is only masquerading as a modernist reformer when he indulges in the democratic cant of સમાજમાં જે દરજ્જો બ્રાહ્મણનો છે તેજ ભંગીનો છે, *i.e.*, " in [Hindu] society the status of the Bhangi is exactly the same as that of the Brahman." [' V.-V.', p. 55]. For, this doctrine of falling or rising in the scale of caste in the *next* life, according to one's actions in *this*, is the real ' Sanātana ' Hindu doctrine taught by the Chhāndogya text quoted above, by the Yoga aphorism [II. 13] which says in effect that the caste etc. of a man are determined by his past karma, by the Mahabharata when it says that a non-Brahman can become a Brahman only after several incarnations, and by the Gita when it calls Śūdras ' pāpayonayah ' ('of sinful birth '), as contrasted with Brahmans of holy birth.

Mr. Gandhi's modernist heresy of supposititious or fictitious equality of all castes was challenged in 1928 by a learned Pandit who asked the Mahatma in an admirably logical letter either to retract his vague insinuation that IX. 32-33 must have been interpolated when the Gita was actually written down (*Navajivan*, 15-1-1928), or to retract his definite statement to the effect that the Gita was a revealed book and contained the assurances of Bhagavan (the Lord) himself. The characteristic reply the Pandit received ran as follows : " Brother Dayaramji, I have received your letter. When you have a doubt about my very honesty, how can I explain my sentiments to you ? " [*Gujarāti*, 4-3-1945]. I do not find any aspersion on Mr. Gandhi's honesty in the letter reproduced in full in the *Gujarati* : it is a scholarly and straightforward letter asking for a straight reply on a straight issue,—which Mr. Gandhi has shirked.

IV

MAHATMIC ' UPLIFT ' OF ' HARIJANS.'

We have seen how the origin of caste by birth goes back to the Vedas and how inequality is inherent in caste at its very source ; and we have seen how ritual and social untouchability of the ' out-caste '—the inevitable result of caste—can also be traced back to authentic Vedic literature. Orthodox Hinduism traces the word ' Antyaja ' (' born at the extreme end ' of Hinduism, born out of its pale) to the Aitareya Brāhmana (VII. 14) where Viśvāmitra curses his disobedient sons that they and their progeny would in future be beyond the ' ends ' (antān) of Aryanism ; and an echo of this idea of excommunication is to be found in the Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad (I. 3. 10) which says : " Therefore one should not go to the ' anta ' ' jana ' ",—which is explained by Śankarāchārya in his scholium thus : " One should not go to the 'Antya jana,' one should have no contact with them by way of sight or speech." And yet Mr. Gandhi wants us to believe that in some ' Golden Age ' of Hinduism (quite non-existent outside his imagination) all castes were quite equal in social status, and that true Hinduism knows not untouchability since it knows no caste lower than the Śūdra. He has no clear idea when and how inequality crept in and untouchability also became part and parcel of orthodox Hinduism, but he makes several vague and conflicting guesses. For instance, વર્ણધર્મ વિકૃત થયો એટલે એમાંથી અસ્પૃશ્યતા ઉપજી, *i.e.*, " when the caste law became perverted [exactly when and how, we are not told] untouchability arose out of it." [' V.-V.' p. 29]. Again, ચાર વર્ણ પતિત થયા, એટલે એ ચારમાંથી પાંચમો ધર્મવિરુદ્ધ વર્ણ પેદા થયો, ને તે અસ્પૃશ્ય મનાયો, *i.e.*, " when the four castes became fallen [again we are not told how and when], then out of these four arose the fifth caste, and it was held to be untouchable." [' V.-V.', p. 88]. Another equally vague and baseless guess attributes untouchability to the calamitous times of Hinduism's fall : પડતીને વખતે આપદ્ધર્મ તરીકે તત્કાળને માટે દાખલ થએલી એ એક વ્યવસ્થા હોવાનો સંભવ છે, *i.e.*, " it is possible that it [untouchability] was a temporary measure introduced as being necessary in times of difficulty in an age of decline." [*Navajivan*, 12-12-1920]. Yet another guess, even more reckless, attributes untouchability to

quite another, and a more definite, cause: મને લાગે છે કે જ્યારે ગોરક્ષાએ આપણા બાપદાદામાં ધર્મનું સ્વરૂપ લીધું ત્યારે જેમણે ગોમાંસ ભક્ષણ ન જ છોડ્યું તેમને સમાજે બહિષ્કૃત કર્યાં હશે, ['Dh.-M.', p. 14], *i.e.*, (to quote the 'Young India' version) "it seems to me that when cow protection became an article of faith with our ancestors, those who persisted in eating beef were excommunicated" ['Y. I.' (Ganesan's reprint), p. 807]. This interesting but fanciful explanation falls to the ground when tested by authentic documentary evidence. We have seen how in Vedic times the idea of ritual and social impurity and untouchability of Chaṇḍāla and Vrishala and even Śūdra, was undoubtedly prevalent—even the Vaiśya was segregated, as P. V. Kane shows in his 'History of Dharmaśāstra' (II. I. p. 42), —and yet in that very age cows and bulls were sacrificed and eaten in vast numbers. To take a classic instance, the holy Rishi Yājnavalkya,—a dominant personality in the Vājasaneyi Samhitā of the Yajurveda, in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, and in the Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad,—winds up an important discussion, as to whether the Dikshita (the initiated officiant) should or should not eat the flesh of the cow sacrificed for the important 'Agnishṭoma' sacrifice, in this eminently common-sense manner: "I for one do eat it provided it be fat." [Śatapatha Br., III. 1, 2, 21]. And in the holy Brihadāraṇyaka Upanishad is given the following sovereign prescription (as translated by C. V. Vaidya on p. 117 of his 'Epic India'): "He who desires to have a son unvanquished in the assembly of Pandits......, who can explain all the Vedas and live a long life, should eat rice cooked with flesh and clarified butter, whether the flesh be that of a bull or a ram." [Br. Up., VIII. 4]. There is a small error in Vaidya's translation: "of a bull or a ram" should be "of an ox or a bull," as the original words are "aukshena vā ārshabhena vā." But this is a mere detail. It may also be noted that quite contrary to Mr. Gandhi's theory, a number of aboriginal tribes like Oraons, Gonds, etc., are very fond of beef and are yet quite 'touchable' to-day.

Thus all Mr. Gandhi's ingenious but unfounded special pleading hopelessly fails to convince us that inequality and untouchability formed no part of pristine Hinduism, pure and undefiled. We must now consider the practical solution he offers of the present problem of untouchability, and the salvation the Mahatmic gospel promises to the downtrodden Untouchables. In doing so, I would, as usual, rather let Mr. Gandhi speak for himself than take on trust the glow-

ing but vague testimony of Professor Wadia about the "memorable service rendered to the cause of Untouchables" by the Mahatma. Mr. Gandhi's well-known prescription is to call the Untouchables 'Harijans' and just declare them to be 'Touchables'; and in one place he suggests vaguely as an ideal: વર્ણધર્મમાં, કહો કે હિંદુધર્મમાં હું અસ્પૃશ્યતાને સ્થાન નથી જોતો. એ વર્ગો...શૂદ્ર વર્ગોમાં ભળી જશે, *i.e.*, "I see no place for untouchability in the caste religion, rather say, in the Hindu religion. These classes will be merged in the Śūdra classes." ['V.-V.', p. 59]. Evidently Mr. Gandhi expects the Śūdras to absorb the Untouchables. Of course, the latter, when thus absorbed and 'uplifted,' will continue to do, to the end of all time, their God-ordained caste duty, 'paricharyā,' *i.e.*, 'service' of the three higher castes; and, perhaps, they will enjoy, for continuing to do their hereditary dirty duties, the additional 'privilege' of being honoured with the special name 'Harijans.' But whether the present-day Untouchables may like it or not, any such absorption of these people by present day Śūdras would be a real miracle which none but an incorrigible super-idealist could hope to see achieved, even in the next one hundred years. The fact of the matter is that the lower we descend in the scale of caste, the keener becomes the desire to appear higher than the still lower castes. The Dubla in Gujarat has been for centuries the despised and exploited agrestic slave attached to the land of the Pāṭidār or other land-holder; and in looks and intelligence he is distinctly inferior to the Surti Dheḍ. But he stoutly refuses to work in a household if a Dhed is also employed there, and he will not draw water from a well polluted by the use of a Dhed. In his book on 'Maria Murder and Suicide,' Mr. Verrier Elwin records the following significant cases: (1) there was a quarrel at a gambling party, and a Mahar beat a Maria Gond, "a serious matter involving the latter's excommunication"; for, to be beaten by an Untouchable is a humiliation entailing loss of caste. So, "the Maria in his drunken rage killed the Mahar"; (2) a nineteen year old Maria boy killed his own father in a drunken quarrel because the old man had called him, among other things, a 'Dhed.' [Pp. 140 and 155]. And the Maria Gond, again, is definitely inferior to the Mahar or Dhed in looks and brains. As matters stand, therefore, the Śūdras will certainly not absorb the Untouchables, whoever else may do so.

Let alone any 'touchable' caste absorbing the Untouchables, even these Antyajas themselves will never become one homogeneous

caste. Not only are there water-tight endogamous castes among them,—so that the Chamar believes he is higher than the Mahar, the Mahar that he is higher than the Mang, and the Mang that he is higher than the Bhangi,—these castes are divided even among themselves. Only about a month ago I had a discussion with my cobbler about his particular caste; when I asked him if he was a 'Haraḷā' Chamar or a 'Rohidās' Chamar, he said, with great pride: "Certainly, I am a Haraḷā; we have nothing to do with the Rohidās Chamars,—they are like Mahars to us"; and he told me that the Cheulā Chamar was lower than the Rohidās and the Kaṭai even lower than the Cheula! And this fissiparous tendency is certainly not restricted to these ignorant and humble lower castes; it is as strong in the highest, the Brahman caste. As the Hindi magazine *Chānd* put it a few years ago, "the Father of Sangathan, Pandit Malaviyaji, will not dine at the house of a low Malaviya even." [*Ārya Prakāsh*, 12-12-1928]. There are hundreds of strictly endogamous Brahman castes, and most of them have their separate 'conferences,' magazines, etc. Thus we have among Maharashtra Brahmans conferences and 'sanghas' of Chitpāvans, Deshastha Rigvedis, Mādhyandinas, Gauds, Saraswats, etc., and among Gujarat Brahmans of numerous castes ranging from Vaḍnagrā Nāgars down to Anāvlās. A quite recent conference of the Anāvlās was presided over by my late friend Mahadev Desai—(private secretary to the Mahatma)—who actually justified the existence of such sub-castes as his own. [*Gujarati*, 26-5-40]. No less a person, again, than a present High Court Judge has presided at the Deshastha Rigvedi Conference; in Christmas 1936, when he was a District Judge, he put up a stout defence of such sub-caste conferences. [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 1-4-1937]. And the conference met again as late as May last at Poona. Coming lower down in the scale of castes, a publicist and patriot of all-India repute, Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha (of Patna) has stoutly defended the existence of the Kāyastha conference,—although he bewailed the division of the Hindustani Kāyasthas into "twelve sections and many more sub-sections," and of Bengali Kāyasthas "at least into four," and pleaded for intermarriage among these sub-sections. And this, after the conference of this highly gifted and educated sub-caste, the Kāyastha, had been in existence for 42 years! ['Speeches and Writings of Dr. S. Sinha,' pp. 734 and 747]. These are only a few of the instances I can cite; but they aptly illustrate

V

THE 'BLUE-PRINT' OF HARIJAN 'UPLIFT.'

Prof. Wadia says that caste is the very 'pivot' of 'popular' Hinduism ; and he adds that Mr. Gandhi has "come in for hard knocks from the hundred per cent. Sanatanists",—presumably because the Mahatma must have disowned and discarded this 'pivot.' We have seen that, as a matter of fact proved by documentary evidence, historical Hinduism from Vedic down to modern times has always regarded caste by birth as the very 'pivot' and hub of its socio-religious policy ; and we have also seen, in Mr. Gandhi's own recorded words, that he not only 'holds on' to this 'pivot',—he goes further and declares that the whole world, if it is to be rescued from its present parlous state and saved from certain destruction, must be converted to his own fervent faith in this gospel of caste by birth *cum* hereditary vocation. In order to acquire a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the Mahatmic teaching on this subject of such vital and all-world importance, it is necessary to go into further details about Mr. Gandhi's religious beliefs which shew that in most things he is really a 'Sanātani' (orthodox) Hindu.

Agreeing with the orthodox teaching on the Subject, Mr. Gandhi has repeatedly expressed disapproval of intermarriage between caste and caste, and also of commensality. He writes: હું પોતે ગમે તેની સાથે ગમે તે ખાવાનો ધર્મ માનતો કે પાળતો નથી ગમે તેની સાથે બેટાબેટીની લેવદેવને સ્વચ્છંદ માનું છું. *i.e.*, "Personally I do not believe in or practise the duty of eating anything with anyone at will; I regard the giving or taking of son and daughter in marriage, to or from any person one likes, as (mere) license." ['V.-V.', p. 12]. It is well known that Mr. Gandhi's own practice in this respect does not quite accord with his theory. But he rightly urges that the theory is in accord with the clear teaching of the Hindu religion: હિંદુ ધર્મ જુદા જુદા વર્ણો વચ્ચેના રોટી અગર બેટી વહેવાર પ્રત્યે આગ્રહપૂર્વક અરુચિ દર્શાવે છે, *i.e.*, "The Hindu religion expresses emphatic disapproval of commensality or intermarriage between different castes" ['Dh.-M.,' p. 7]. As to the duty of stiking to one's ancestral profession, however, he is never in two minds. He writes with earnest conviction: વર્ણને

આજીવિકાના ધંધાની સાથે નિકટનો સંબંધ છે. સૌનો ધંધો તેનો સ્વધર્મ છે. તેને જે છોડે છે તે વર્ણભ્રષ્ટ થાય છે ને તેનો પોતાનો નાશ થાય છે, એટલે તેનો આત્મા હણાય છે. *i.e.*, "Caste has a close connection with the profession for one's livelihood. Everyone's (ancestral) profession is his own 'dharma' (duty or religion). Whoever gives it up, falls from his caste, and is himself destroyed, that is, his soul is destroyed." ['V.-V.', p. 168]. How extreme Mr. Gandhi's dread in this respect is can be seen from this uncompromising dictum: દરજીએ લુહાર ન બનવું જોઈએ જો કે બન્ને વૈશ્ય ગણાતા હોય અને ગણાવા જોઈએ. *i.e.*, "A (born) tailor must not become an ironsmith, although both might and should be considered to be Vaiśyas (by caste)." ['V.-V.', p. 57]. By calling both tailor and ironsmith 'Vaiśyas,' Mr. Gandhi perhaps means that these two sub-castes (for the Darjis and the Luhars certainly are water-tight sub-castes) may and should intermarry. And he does deprecate such endless subdivisions of sub-castes as "Dasā' and 'Visā,' 'Modh' and 'Lāḍ,' 'Hālāri' and 'Ghoghāri' among Banias. ['V.-V.', p. 132) . But, with all that he also sees many good points, and even sovereign virtues, in such sub-castes and sub-sub-castes. He writes: હું પેટા જ્ઞાતિઓને કેટલેક અંશે માન આપું છું. તે કેવળ સમાજની સગવડને અર્થે. *i.e.*, "To a certain extent I respect sub-sub-castes, only because of social convenience." ['V.-V.', p. 130]. This rather cryptic testimonial we find reiterated at a sub-caste conference by a chosen disciple of the Mahatma. When presiding over the Anāvlā conference at Surat in 1940, Mahadev Desai formally denounced 'jnātis' (sub-castes) while glorifying 'varṇas' (castes), but added: આજે જ્ઞાતિઓને કૃત્રિમ રીતે તોડી શકાય એમ નથી...અને એમાં દૂષણો બાદ કરીએ તો એક પ્રકારની સામાજિક સગવડતા જ્ઞાતિઓ સાચવે છે, *i.e.*, "Today it is not possible to break sub-castes by artificial means......And, if we take away the defects in them, the sub-castes in a way serve a social convenience." [*Gujarati*, 26-5-1940]. This service rendered by sub-castes becomes clearer when Mr. Gandhi thus defends and justifies the existence of so many more than the four primary—and rather theoretical—castes: વર્ણાશ્રમ કાયદો છે તેનું વ્યાવહારિક રૂપ જ્ઞાતિ છે. જ્ઞાતિમાં વધઘટ થાય છે... જ્ઞાતિનો બહિષ્કાર એ દંડ છે. ને સર્વ જ્ઞાતિની પાસે એ હોવો જોઈએ, *i.e.*, "'Varṇa' (caste) *cum* 'āśrama' (stage of life) constitutes the law; its practical form is the sub-caste. Sub-castes increase and decrease (in number)......Expulsion from the sub-

caste is the sanction [for enforcing the law], and all sub-castes must have it." ['Dh.-M.', p. 25]. Mr. Gandhi goes even further, and, incidentally, flatly contradicts Professor Wadia's dictum that "so long as popular Hinduism insists on holding on to caste as its pivot, there is no hope for India generally." For, the Mahatma writes: મારી નજરે આપણી આજની અધોગતિના મૂળમાં આપણો જાતિભેદ નથી, *i.e.*, "In my eyes, our caste division is not at the root of our present degradation." ['Dh.-M.', p. 29]. Not only so, but જાતિભેદના પાયા ઉપર હિંદુસ્તાનની ઇમારત ઊભી રહી શકી છે, એવી મારી માન્યતા છે, *i.e.*, "I believe that the edifice of 'Hindustan' has been able to remain standing because it is based on the foundation of caste division." [It is very interesting to note that Mr. Gandhi restricts the word 'Hindustan' here to Hindu India and thus anticipates the complementary idea of Pakistan. But this is by the way.] Mr. Gandhi proceeds: જ્ઞાતિસંસ્થામાં સ્વરાજ્યનું બીજ છે, જુદી જુદી જાતિઓ લશ્કરની ટુકડીઓ જેવી છે. *i.e.*, "In the institution of sub-castes lies the seed of Swaraj. The various sub-castes are like contingents of an army." ['Gandhi-Śikshaṇ,' Vol. II, p. 77]. The only reason why 'Hindustan' has degenerated is that somehow the unnatural infection of inequality entered and corrupted the grand natural Law of Caste: હિંદુધર્મના વિકાસક્રમમાં કોઇક કાળે . . ઊંચનીચપણાના સડાએ પેસીને એને બગાડી નાખ્યો, *i.e.*, "At some time in the course of the evolution of the Hindu religion the rot of high-and-low-ism entered and ruined it." ['V.-V.', p. 55]. For, વર્ણવિભાગમાં ભેદ દૃષ્ટિ અસમાનતા અગર ઊંચનીચપણું કશું છેજ નહિ, *i.e.*, "In caste division there is no such thing as any idea of distinction, inequality or 'high-and-low-ness'." ['Dh.-M.', p. 29]. Moreover, this 'rot' is not anything to worry about; for, એમાં સહેલાઇથી સુધારણા થઇ શકે તેમ છે, હિંદુસ્તાનમાં તેમ આખી દુનિઆમાં આજે જે લોકયુગ જોતજોતામાં પ્રવર્તી રહ્યો છે, તેને પરિણામે હિંદુ જાતિઓમાંથી પણ ઊંચનીચના ખ્યાલ સહેજે નીકળી જશે, *i.e.*, "This can be easily improved. Ideas of high and low will easily disappear from Hindu sub-castes also as a result of the democratic era that is quickly spreading in India and also in the whole world." ['Dh.-M.', p. 30]. And this, in spite of the emphatic Mahatmic denunciation of everything Western a few pages later on: મેં જોયું છે કે આપણા વિચારના પાયા પાશ્ચાત્ય અસરે હાલી ઉઠયા છે. પાશ્ચાત્ય સભ્યતા શયતાનની પ્રવૃત્તિરૂપ છે, *i.e.*, "I have noticed that the very bases of our thought have been severely shaken by Western influences. Western civilisation is the creation

of Satan." ['Dh.-M.', p. 65]. Can any good come out of the Satanic West? But this again is only by the way.

Some other important aspects of Mr. Gandhi's orthodoxy are also of great interest as they help us to visualise the place the 'uplifted' Untouchable is to occupy in the Gandhian 'blue-print' of reformed and regenerated Hinduism. Besides a devout faith in caste by birth *cum* profession, Mr. Gandhi rightly insists on temple worship as a cardinal tenet of Hinduism: મંદિર વિના હિંદુ ધર્મ ન ચાલે..મંદિર તોડો એટલે ધર્મ તૂટયો *i.e.*, "Without the temple the Hindu religion can not go on..... Destroy the temple and you destroy the religion." ['Dh.-M.', p. 182.] And, of course, there would be no Hindu temple if there were no idol in it. Under the insidious influence of Western Satanism, which attaches a derogatory meaning to the word 'idolatry,' Mr. Gandhi resorts to some amusing shifts in order to swallow 'idols' while straining at 'idolatry.' For instance he writes: "Idolatry is bad, not so idol worship." ['Harijan,' 9-3-1940]. In the same compromising vein he says: દોષ મૂર્તિની પૂજામાં નથી, દોષ અણસમજભરી પૂજામાં છે, *i.e.*, "The fault does not lie in the worship of an idol, it lies in unintelligent worship (of the idol)." ["Dh.-M.', p. 177]. But when quite free from the taint of Western materialism, he emphatically asserts: હું પાષાણાદિની મૂર્તિમાં પણ માનું છું *i.e.*, "I believe even in idols made of stone, etc." ['Dh.-M.', p. 193]. Keeping these fundamental religious ideas in mind, let us now see what latitude Mr. Gandhi is prepared to grant to Untouchables in the matter of temple entry. He writes: જેટલાં દેવાલયો છે તે બધાંમાં અંત્યજોને જવાનો હક હોવો જોઇએ એ કેમ બની શકે? હિંદુ ધર્મમાં જયાં સુધી વર્ણાશ્રમ ધર્મને પ્રધાનપદ આપવામાં આવ્યું છે, ત્યાં સુધી એમ કહેવું કે દરેક દેવાલયમાં પ્રત્યેક હિંદુ જઇ શકે એ આજ નહિ બને, "How is it possible that the Antyajas should have the right to enter all the existing temples? As long as the law of caste and Āśrama has the chief place in the Hindu religion, to say that every Hindu can enter every temple is a thing that is not possible today." ['Gandhi-Śikshaṇ,' Vol. II, p. 132]. A very characteristic (but not very convincing) reason why the Untouchables are today unfit to enter Hindu temples is thus advanced by Mr. Gandhi: અંત્યજ ભાઇઓને એટલું કહીશ કે...જે દોષો તમારામાં આરોપીને હિંદુઓ તમારો ત્યાગ કરે છે તે દોષો ટાળજો. તમારામાંથી વ્યસની હોય, પરમાટી ખાનારા હોય, તે મંદિરમાં નહિ જઇ શકે એવો નિયમ કરજો, *i.e.*, "I will say this to my Antyaja brothers

......'get rid of those faults which Hindus charge you with as a reason for renouncing you. Make it a rule that those among you who are [liquor] addicts, those who eat flesh, shall not enter temples.'" ['Dh.-M,' p. 181]. It is well known that not only Rajputs etc., but millions of North Indian Brahmans also eat flesh and fish; and millions of caste Hindus do also drink. Has Mr. Gandhi ever said that these caste Hindus should not be allowed to enter temples unless they give up flesh and liquor? But that, once more, is by the way.

We have so far made a fairly comprehensive study, carefully documented and scrupulously objective, of Mr. Gandhi's religious convictions and of the theory and technique of the Mahatmic gospel of 'Harijan Uplift.' It would be superfluous to comment on this self-luminous gospel; and it would be equally superfluous to contrast with this authentic 'blue-print' the vague popular exaggerations, sedulously propagated by a gramophone press and other propagandist agencies, as regards the actual fruit of this gospel, the mighty achievements of the Mahatma as the sole champion and saviour of the Untouchables. These exaggerations are surprisingly reminiscent of those in the Purāṇas about the achievements of past Avatars,— surprisingly but quite aptly; for the Mahatma's eminent admirers have vied with one another in apotheosising him as a veritable Avatar of Buddha and Jesus and several other saviours rolled into one. We are not here concerned with these quite interesting attempts at myth-making. We are concerned only with the reality as seen in the cold white light of reason. We shall, therefore, pass on to the actual results of the great Uplift movement in practice.

VI

'HARIJAN UPLIFT' IN GUJARAT.

We have made a fairly exhaustive study of the theory and technique of 'Harijan Uplift'. Now we shall try to assess the actual results of full twenty-five years of 'Harijan Uplift' in practice. To put the matter rather mildly, not even the most lenient assessor, if he be not blinded by partiality or deliberately dishonest, can say that the achievements have been at all commensurate with the tremendous expenditure of time and money, emotion and energy on the country-wide 'Harijan Uplift' propaganda strenuously carried on by the best organised and most popular all-India political party led and inspired by the greatest living Indian master of the art of propaganda. To put it more bluntly, 'Harijan Uplift' has proved in effect a ghastly fiasco, and a cruel farce. In support of this apparently sweeping judgment, I can not do better than cite a witness whose testimoney can not be impeached or even challenged by any one, coming as it does 'straight from the horse's mouth,'—from a leading Congress paper. As the hackneyed Urdu verse puts it, "What fun would it be if an outsider were to lift the veil"? ("*Kyā lutf jo ghair parda khole*"?) In a leading article on the All India Scheduled Classes Conference held at Cawnpore about the end of January 1944, the *Bombay Chronicle* referred to the various attempts made by Indian reformers since Buddha's days, and wrote: "But such is the passivity of Hindu society that both caste and untouchability still thrive. Nay, several Hindu leaders......misguided by the interested propaganda by certain Britishers, still plead that there is some mysterious virtue in caste because Hindu culture has remained to-day. Else, they argue, caste would not have survived the shocks of centuries......It is most tragic to find that, in spite of all that Gandhiji and other reformers .... have done, untouchability still persists to no small extent. It is most rampant in villages ....Even in a city like Bombay, a person known to be a sweeper, let alone a scavenger, however clean dressed he may be, is not allowed to enter a caste Hindu restaurant, nay, even an Irani's reatsurant for tea." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 4-2-1944.] It was a brave leading article—very bravely headed 'Caste must Go!'—

and well-meaning too, but it was very ill informed. For instance, among other things, it quite wrongly attributed to Buddha, as well as to Mr. Gandhi, the utter repudiation and denial of caste; whereas, as a matter of fact and history, Buddha believed in caste because he believed in 'Karma' and reincarnation, exactly as Mr. Gandhi (as we have seen) fervently and relgiously believes in caste because he as fervently and religiously believes, not only in 'Karma' and reincarnation, but also what Buddha did *not* believe in,—the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures. And, of course, Mr. Gandhi is certainly not "misguided", as the paper recklessly alleges, by the "interested propaganda" of real or imaginary scheming and Satanic Britishers. The solution of the problem of untouchability proposed by the paper,—namely, that as the 'out-caste' is the inevitable product of caste, 'Caste Must Go',—was no doubt right, but it was also thoughtlessly temerarious. For, if caste goes, what remains of Hinduism? As very careful inquirers have noted, the only definition of 'Hinduism' that can subsume every professing Hindu would be "religious belief in 'Karma,' rebirth, and caste." As I have said before, "if caste goes, Hinduism goes".

A few months earlier the same paper had reported: "A great commotion is said to have been created at Thana because Mr. M. M. Nandgaonkar, a Harijan leader and ex-Vice-President of the local Municipality, was refused tea at a Hindu Hotel in the town." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 27-8-1943]. The next day the paper returned to the charge in an indignant third leader, declared that the same treatment was given to Untouchables in Bombay city also, and wrote: "When Gandhiji fasted in 1932, some feverish attempts were made to have some temples and hotels opened to Harijans. Now the actual position is nearly what it used to be before with regard to temple entry and access to hotels." [The paper said plaintively later on, "the cleanest Harijan is not admitted to temples and hotels."] "Yet many anti-untouchability workers take a complacent view of these disabilities and patronisingly talk of 'uplift first' for Harijans, saying that when Harijans learn to be clean, their civic disabilities will fall off automatically. This is rank nonsense." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 28-8-1943.] It is not only 'rank nonsense,' it is deliberate eye-wash also. A special restaurant was opened during the Congress regime, with an immense amount of ostentation by Congress propagandists, for the

joint use of Untouchables and caste Hindus. In spite of the tremendous publicity given to it,—with the usual processions and inaugural speeches by leading Congressmen,—the restaurant did not last even through the short-lived Congress regime ; in fact it was still born, and we never heard of it after the routine farce of the inaugural tamasha.

The fact of the matter is that there never has been real change of heart even in leading Congress Hindus in the matter of "Harijan Uplift." And the reason is quite clear. As the inspirer of this movement himself believes in caste by birth, and still more fervently in hereditary vocations, the movement is limited at its very source to mere melioration, mere surface treatment for show purposes. I am credibly informed that all the pots and pans in the stately palace, where the historic histrionic fast of 1932 took place in Poona, were sold off, and I have also heard a story that the whole palace was ceremonially purified with holy 'gomutra' (cow's urine) and holy 'gomaya' (cow-dung) after the tragi-comedy was over, because it had been 'polluted' by the comings and goings of Dr. Ambedkar and other Untouchables 'of sinful birth,'—exactly as in 1927, the 'Chowdar' tank at Mahad (near Mahableshwar) had been 'purified' with holy cow-dung and holy cow's urine by the local Brahmans because it had been 'polluted' by Dr. Ambedkar and his followers by taking water from it,—and as the Vaishṇava temple at Phanaswadi (Bombay) had been 'purified' with the same holy ingredients because it had been 'polluted' by the same Dr. Ambedkar again. [*Times of India*, 10-8-1927]. This instinctive horror of Untouchables that seems to be bred in the very bones of caste Hindus comes out in any number of our homely proverbs and traditional usages in respect of these unfortunate outcastes. As I have pointed out elsewhere, to the caste Hindu these low castes are a disgusting nuisance, somehow to be tolerated at a proper distance, very bad rubbish the sooner got rid of the better. And this instinctive aversion inherited through a hundred generations has given rise to such proverbs as "Mahar melā, viṭāḷ gelā" in Marathi, and "Ḍheḍ muo ne ābhaḍchheṭ ṭaḷi" in Gujarati,—both meaning exactly the same thing—"If the Mahar (or Dhed) dies, there is one source of pollution the less," or, "it is good riddance of bad rubbish." No wonder then that after so many years of strenuous 'Harijan Uplift' by Congress people, whenever the staunch followers of the true doctrine of Civil Disobedience, Truth, Non-

violence and 'Harijan Uplift' have opposed in mass the entry of traitors into Satanic Councils and Assemblies, this instinctive feeling of aversion and loathing for the Untouchables has unconsciously burst out in the shape of slogans. Leaders of huge Khaddar-clad crowds in this great city have asked the question "Who will go into the Councils?"—and the crowds of 'Harijan Uplifters' have howled the set reply: "Mahar jashe, Chamar jashe,—Ḍheḍ jashe, Bhangi jashe!" ("Mahars will go, Chamars will go,—Ḍheḍs will go, Bhangis will go!")—meaning, of course, that the traitors who should commit the unspeakable sin of entering the Councils would fall to the unspeakably low level of these vile outcastes.

Let us next consider the actual achievements of the Congress and its own Government in the Bombay Province (and especially in Gujarat), over and above the theatrical token opening of the restaurant for the fictitious joint use of caste Hindus and untouchables. As regards temple entry, interesting figures were supplied by the Congress Government in 1939. These figures showed that out of the thousands—rather tens of thousands—of temples in the Province, only 142 had been thrown open. Out of these 142, again, as many as 102 belonged to Poona and Dharwar districts. Some very revealing information was elicited through subsidiary questions put by Mr. Gaikwad. One such question brought out the fact that out of the 142 temples 'thrown open' only 21 were thrown open by trustees of temples; the rest were, as Mr. Gaikwad picturesquely put it, 'ownerless gods,' that is, wayside shrines of such godlings as are worshipped only by the lower castes and which required no 'throwing open.' Another striking fact revealed by the figures was that not a single temple had been thrown open in the 'home' districts of the Father of 'Harijan Uplift'—the Gujarat Districts. A very pertinent query by Mr. Gaikwad drawing attention to this strange phenomenon was shouted down by the 'Honourable' President with 'Order, order!' [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 17-8-1939].

It is certainty a pertinent and legitimate query of great significance as to why the Gujaratis who are the most fanatical (and favoured) devotees of the new Avatar should themselves prove so utterly unwilling to follow his gospel. Mr. Gandhi's own Gujarati paper helplessly admitted in 1940: "The untouchability of the 'Harijans' in the matter of entry into schools persists nowhere so much still as in Gujarat." [*Harijan-bandhu*, 10-3-1940]. A monthly letter, issued by the official Harijan Sevak Sangh a few

months later, " states that Harijans of Godhavi in Ahmedabad Distrisct were so persecuted by caste Hindus for sending their children to the Local Board School that ultimately 42 Harijan families left that place......and went to the Taluka town of Sanand." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 27-8-1940]. During the Congress regime the caste Hindus of Matar (in Matar Taluka) held a mass meeting to protest against the sacrilegious orders of that Government in respect of admitting Untouchables into temples and schools. [*Bombay Samachar*, 19-12-1938]. Mr. Parikshitlal Majmudar bewailed the recalcitrance of the caste Hindus of Pamol (in Borsad Taluka) who had for more than two years resisted all attempts to get 'Harijan' students admitted into the local school. [*Harijan-Bandhu*, 18-9-1938]. And here is the report dated 22-10-1940 of a 'Harijan' visitor to the Government girls' school at Palsana (Taluka Palsana) : "The Harijan girls were as usual sitting (separately) in one corner. When I asked the caste girls belonging to the sixth standard, they said, 'Why, these are Ḍheḍ girls! How can we touch them?' [When the visitor asked the Head Mistress she said,] 'The Harijan girls sit aloof of their own choice'......After the Harijan girls had gone home at 2-30 P.M., I inquired as to what had happened after my departure. A first standard girl, Jamna Chhaganlal, aged ten, said : " as soon as you left ......the master (sic) gave me two kicks in the side and said : 'So, it was YOU who brought him to the school? And you are very eager to sit together (with caste girls), aren't you?' " [*Dāndio*, 14-11-1940]. In 1939, caste Hindu primary school teachers under training living in the Sabarmati Vidyapith (Ahmedabad) hostel, revolted against an order requiring them to dine in the hostel dining-room seated in a line with (though not touching) the Untouchable and other teachers. The cause of orthodoxy was championed by a prominent Congress paper, the *Bombay Samachar*; in a strong editorial it condemned the authorities for thus hurting religious susceptibities and it advised them and the Vidyapith to bow to 'public opinion.' [*Bombay Samachar*, 10-7-39]. The same trouble broke out in a much more violent form in 1941 at the Premchand Raychand Training College Hostel, Ahmedabad. The caste Hindu teachers stoutly resisted the order and refused to commit the 'adharma' of dining seated in a line with untouchable teachers, and rather than do so and lose caste, all of them numbering 125 left the hostel. Their case was stre-

nuously fought by a well-known retired educationist who was a staunch Congressman at one time. [*Gujarati*, 14-12-1941]. And all this in the very home and cradle of the movement, after more than twenty years of 'Harijan Uplift!'

VII

CONGRESS 'UPLIFT' OF 'HARIJANS.'

On 4th June, 1939, the Western and Central India Harijan Sevaks' Conference was held at Poona, with Mrs. Rameshwari Nehru as president. Mr. Premier Kher inaugurated the proceedings, and in his inspiring address he admitted that in spite of herculean efforts made through centuries past by Indian saints and reformers the caste idea was so deep rooted in the Indian mind that castes still flourished among Hindus and even among non-Hindus. "And yet," continued the Congress Premier with superbly heroic if not quite logical optimism, "I believe that untouchability will definitely disappear in three or four years. Why, even today untouchability is as good as dead. It is therefore I feel that untouchability will disappear even if castes remain." [*Dnyān Prakāsh* 7-6-1939]. Not 'three or four,' but full five years have passed since this inanely rhetorical and fatuously short-dated prophecy was made; but untouchability is certainly not showing even any signs of 'disappearing.' But whether it disappear soon or late, or not at all, one reason why the Congress 'Uplift' has proved so utterly futile is that even the Grand Panjandrums high up in the Congress hierarchy have all along held hopelessly conflicting views about the very fundamentals of the problem of caste and untouchability. Thus here we have a Congress Premier vaguely 'feeling,' apparently without any conviction, that untouchability will quickly disappear though castes 'may' remain. That Mr. Kher's premiership was purely adventitious, and that he was a mere cipher before he was pitchforked into the premiership by the unscrupulous wire-pullers behind the dirty anti-Nariman intrigue, does not affect our argument; we have to ignore the personality and think only of the office of 'Congress Premier,' or of 'Pant-Pradhān' as all Marathi papers always called the Premier, fondly and aptly reviving memories of the Peshwa regime. As opposed to this high official's opinion, we have that of a real hierarch, 'Acharya' Kripalani, which differs totally in its pompous certainty from the Congress Premier's vague 'feeling.' As reported by the *Leader* of Allahabad, the 'Acharya,' in his reply to the 'Jāt-Pāt Toṛak Manḍal' [an association that wants to destroy caste root and branch], declared,

rightly and rightfully employing the pontifical plural: " Our belief is that once untouchability is removed......the caste system will automatically disappear," [*Leader*, 22-12-1939,]—which, by the bye, amounts to saying that the caste system is the product of untouchability. But the same paper gave also the opinion of the hierarch actually in charge of the Untouchability Department of the Congress, Mr. A. V. Thakkar, *alias* Thakkar-bāpā; and in its turn it is directly opposed to that of the 'Acharya.' For, Mr. Thakkar says: "As an institution it [*i.e.*, untouchability] is the logical result of the caste system, which seems to be an organic part of the Hindu social organisation. It can therefore be completely abolished only by the abolition of the present system, or at least its transformation." [*Leader*, 14-1-1940.] That wobbling 'trnsformation', it may be noted in passing, looks suspiciously like a weak surrender to the inexorable spirit of caste which few Indians, and extremely few Hindus, can free themselves from. But still Mr. Thakkar's standpoint is quite clear. And next we have Mr. Gandhi, *alias* Bāpuji, who religiously believes in caste as a grand law of Nature and holds untouchability to be a mere accident. Thus it is quite evident from this illuminating little symposium on caste and untouchability that 'Pant Pradhanji' differs from 'Acharyaji'; 'Bāpāji' differs from both; and 'Bāpuji' differs from all three. And I have little doubt that, similarly the whole gamut from Sardarji and Rajaji right down to prancing puppets like Munshiji and Misraji constitutes a grand cacophony of quite discordant notes on the subject. Such being the case, and the entire hierarchy, from the supreme pontiff and his cardinals down to the puppet episcopate set up by them, being thus quite at sixes and sevens among themselves about the very fundamentals of the problem of untouchability, is it any wonder that the 'Harijan Uplift' movement should have proved in practice a hollow sham and almost a heartless farce?

But to return to the proceedings of the Poona conference of 'Harijan Sevaks' inaugurated by the Congress Premier. Only eleven days after reporting the Premier's inaugural speech, the same Poona paper published a long and indignant communication from Mr. Shankar Balvant Chavān throwing a flood of revealing light on Mr. Kher's vague but gallantly optimistic gesture as an ardent champion of 'Harijan Uplift'. Mr. Chavān wrote that during his recent visit to Satara he had investigated certain com-

plaints about the bigoted Brahmanism shown by the Brahman Head Master of the local Government High School. One complaint was that at the annual social gathering of the High School the school authorities had insisted that non-Brahman boys should not sit in the same 'pangat' [line] at dinner with Brahman boys, and that owing to the bitter feelings roused in the city over this segregation of non-Brahmans, the function had to be celebrated under police protection. But what happened a few weeks after the police-protected social gathering was so remarkable that it is best to give it in Mr. Chavān's own words: "The 1939 Vernacular School Final examination was held at Satara in the Government High School building, under the supervision of the Head Master. But the seating arrangements for candidates were made according to castes; there was one block for advanced (higher) castes, another for less advanced castes, and a third for backward castes......The Congress Government does not believe in untouchability; then why were untouchable boys not allowed to sit among the touchable boys?......It is nearly two months and a half since this incident took place, but no explanation has so far been published by the Government......An editorial on the subject appeared in the *Grāmoddhār* newspaper of Satara dated 10-4-1939, and a copy of the issue was handed by Mr. Jedhe to Mr. Kher at the Harijan Conference held at Poona." [The same Conference at which Mr. Kher made the prophecy above referred to! The writer adds that Mr. Jedhe had compelled the Premier to read out the article before the Conference.] "A copy of the issue was given also to Mr. 'Kākārao' Gadgil [President of the Maharashtra Congress Committee], but ......he quietly put it in his pocket. Does Mr. Shankarrao Dev [Chief of the Congress 'High Command' in Maharashtra] approve of what took place at Satara? If not, what steps did he take against it, either through his paper or his party?" [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 18-6-1939]. In fact, the Premier and all the other Congress bigwigs just sat tight in dignified silence. That cranky and crotchetty Marathi historiographer, the late Vishvanath Rajwade, had a violent prejudice against the 'Karhada' sub-caste of Brahmans, whom he roundly traduced as 'sweet-spoken self-seekers' ('sākhar perun āplè hita sādhuāre), and he put the entire blame for the Maratha defeat at Panipat (in 1761) on the Peshwa's agent in North India, Govindpant Bundela, who was a 'Karhada,' and whose surname was 'Kher.' [' Aitihāsika Prastāvanā, p. 66.] Of course

this was rank sub-caste prejudice on the part of the 'Chitpavan' Rajwade; but his sweeping denunciation of the Karhadas involuntarily came back to my mind on reading Mr. Chavān's letter. And the cream of the joke lies in the fact that Mr. Kher himself was in charge of the Education portfolio.

It is a singularly happy augury, therefore, that at the Conference of Congress representatives held in Bombay on 29th October, 1944, the resolution "expressing the opinion that it was the duty of Congressmen to do more intense and practical work *among Harijans*, who were still subjected to several disabilities," was moved by Mr. B. G. Kher, "former Prime Minister of Bombay." [*Times of India*, 30-10-1944]. There was some very interesting discussion at the Poona Conference held in 1939 which would seem to explain the present necessity of doing "more intense and practical work among Harijans" themselves who evidently do not know their own interests and therefore require to be 'uplifted' willy-nilly. Mr. Kākāsaheb Barve, President of the Harijan Sevak Sangh and convener of the Poona Confernece, referred to the caste people's opposition to entry of 'Harijan' children into public schools, and said: "A more important problem is that of water supply. Although the Government and the District Local Boards have thrown open all public wells, tanks, etc., for the Harijans, the orders are not being put into force as they ought to be." [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 7-6-1939.] But the Premier had given a sufficient reply to this complaint only a couple of weeks earlier, when performing the opening ceremony of cottages for 'Harijans' at Khār (Bombay), on 22-5-1939. Mr. Kher then exhorted the 'Harijans' to "assert their rights," and to "fight against any interference with them," and went on to give the instance of a village well in Khandesh thrown open by himself a few months earlier, when hundreds of Harijans who had come for the occasion had drawn water from the well. The newspaper report of the Premier's speech at Khar proceeds: "The next day, however......when some Harijans attempted to take water from the well, they were stoned by caste Hindus and they had to stop using the well. What was even more significant was that when a case was filed in a law court for this harassment, no one was willing to come forward to give evidence and the case had to be dropped. It would thus be seen, said the Premier, that law by itself could do little without the active co-operation of the Harijans themselves." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 23-5-1939]. It is

very surprising if Mr. Kher really and honestly believes that the 'Harijans' are thus perversely holding up their own 'uplift' by not 'asserting their rights' and not coming forward to give evidence in such cases. For the official Gujarati gazette of Congress 'Harijan Uplift' had made it quite clear a couple of years earlier why these unfortunate people *dare not* 'assert their rights.' In that gazette, run by the Mahatma himself, Mr. Narhari D. Parikh, a prominent Congress worker among 'Harijans,' described the routine conditions prevailing in the Kaira District [again a 'home' district of the Mahatma !] in the matter of school entry for untouchable children, and showed how the 'Harijans' were so terrorised by caste Hindus that they were mortally afraid to send their children to Local Board schools. Mr. Parikh continued: "For they know that if they did send their children to the schools, the very next day their huts, their haystacks, their standing crops would be in danger.......They fear that their locations would be attacked, the hut, hay-stack or standing crop of any Harijan would be burnt down." [*Harijan-bandhu*, 29-8-1937]. And yet, complained the plausible Premier in 1939, with something like indignant surprise, these deluded 'Harijans' absurdly refused to "assert their rights"!

Evidently Mr. Kher is of opinion that Mr. Narhari Parikh was wrong, and it was the 'Harijans,' and *not* the caste Hindus, who were perversely holding up their own 'uplift' so generously and dramatically staged by star Congressmen in the shape of a well thrown open here, a few huts thrown open there, and an 'Uplift' conference held at a third place. And that is why "intensive practical work is necessary *among the Harijans*," as the most recent Congress resolution moved by Mr. Kher says, and *not* among the caste Hindus. If it be so, I can point out one such urgent 'practical work' that Mr. Kher's noble band of 'uplifters' can immediately take in hand. It is a matter of fact and common history that in that very homeland of 'Ahimsa' and 'Jiva-dayā',—[of Non-violence and overflowing charity even for innocent insects like bugs who are feasted on the superfluous blood of hired hefty Bhaiyas so carefully tied down to bedsteads teeming with hungry little vermin that the precious life of a single bug may not be endangered,]—that is to say, in Gujarat and Kathiawad, most epidemics, especially those among cattle, are firmly believed by caste Hindus to be fiendishly caused by the Untouchables by means of their

black magic and with the help of their malignant deities like 'Melaḍi Mātā,' etc. For instance, in 1934, when a cattle epidemic called 'Sākarḍo' played havoc among the buffaloes and other cattle in several villages under Bhāvnagar—a great stronghold of the Gandhian creed, by the way,—as usual the Bhangis, etc., were accused of black magic, and many of them were chained and tortured to induce them to 'call back' their infernal magic, with the result that at least one Bhangi was actually, killed. [*Janmabhumi*, 23-8-1934; *Hindustan-Prajamitra*, 23-8-1934; etc.] One paper reported that not one but three such Untouchables were murdered. [*Roshni*, 1-9-1934]. And now, exactly ten years later, the same trouble has recurred in the same State, and the Untouchables are again accused of causing 'Sākarḍo' by means of their infernal black art. [*Phulchhāb*, 1-9-1944]. Should not Mr. Kher and his noble 'Uplifters' proceed at once to the scene of action and do the "practical work *among Harijans*" of inducing these erring people to 'call back' their black magic and give up the black art for ever? For, otherwise the aggrieved caste people will naturally be compelled to go on torturing and killing one or more of these misguided magicians now and then, in sheer self-defence.

VIII.

'HARIJAN UPLIFT' IN CONGRESS PROVINCES.

The unreality and insincerity of the Congress 'Harijan Uplift' movement becomes also evident from the undoubted fact that this important 'plank' in the original Mahatmic trinity of 'planks' in the 1920 Congress platform has practically dropped out and for quite a number of years has been almost forgotten. Only occasionally spasmodic attempts are made to keep up the show as a mere matter of form,—such, for example, as the formal resolution moved by Mr. Kher at the recent conference of Congress representatives. Otherwise, no one ever thinks of the Untouchables, and even leading Depressed Class members of the Congress itself are contemptuously ignored. An instance in point is provided by the farcical account of the preliminary meeting called by the Congress party in the Bombay Municipal Corporation in connection with the proposed public meeting to express regret for Mrs. Kasturbai Gandhi's death,—in itself an illustration of revolting political opportunism, exploiting, after her death, a poor devoted woman, nobly selfless, but just tolerated, ignored and scarcely well treated throughout her life; even a Gujarati admirer of the Mahatma, author of 'Āpaṇa Mahājano,' has unconsciously blundered into the truth in one lurid sentence in a pæan of praise in honour of his hero: "If Kasturba had been born in a western country, she would most probably have divorced Mahatmaji." [Quoted in *Nava-prakāsh*, 19-1-1941]. However that may be, Mr. Devrukhkar, a Depressed Class corporator, had to protest strongly before the conveners even thought of adding the names of two Untouchable members to the list of signatories. [*Vividha Vritta*, 5-3-1944]. Two remarkable achievements of the Bombay Congress Ministry in the field of 'Harijan Uplift' deserve to be recorded here. The Mahar 'Vatan' is a miserable pittance which the Vatandar Mahar gets from the land revenue of his village, and in return for it the Vatandar used to do two or three 'māmooli' (merely customary) services such as carrying the Government post, watching at night, etc. The Congress Government generously increased the number of services to *nineteen*, and made them *statutory*. The same Government graded Government doles according

to caste, the higher castes getting more and the lower castes less, so that naturally the Untouchables came last with the smallest dole. And I am informed by an Untouchable member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly that none showed more fanaticism in such matters than the Revenue Minister of the 'Harijan Uplifting' Congress Government.

But the most telling commentary on the achievements of the Congress in this Province in the field of 'Harijan Uplift,' and incidentally also on the patronising resolution moved by Mr. Kher at the Conference of Congress representatives, comes quite opportunely, and with perfect dramatic irony, from Karhad (Satara District)—the home of Karhada Brahmans—where the first session of the Satara District Scheduled Castes Federation was held so recently as on 26th November, 1944, under the presidentship of Mr. R. R. Bhole, Advocate, of Poona, who was taken in procession, in a chariot drawn by 51 bullocks, by a vast concourse of thousands of Untouchables assembled from all over the district. This highly spiritual but rather puerile craze for carting presidents of conferences, etc. behind the tails of 51 bullocks, or 71 camels, or 101 elephants, has spread from the Congress to the Muslim League, and then to the Conferences of Untouchables. As a matter of strict Hindu canon law, however, the Untouchables have no right to associate with any animals except asses and dogs [Manu, X-51]. Hence, they practised *adharma* (irreligion) at Karhad, in yoking bullocks to the presidential vehicle. Be that as it may, most of the speeches made at this conference convincingly expose the claims of Congressmen to pose before the world as sole champions and benefactors of the Untouchables. Mr. Gaikwad, M.L.A., in what Poona papers call a 'thoughtful' speech said: "We do not want the Swaraj of White Caps, just as we don't want the Swaraj of Fez Caps. If the Swaraj of White Caps is to come, our future condition will be unsafe. If any proof be needed for this statement, it can be supplied by their rule of 27 months. At that time Congress people had made our position intolerable. If there is a Congress regime in future, we shall be utterly crushed." Mr. Bāpusaheb Rājbhoj of Poona said in his speech: "I had for a while joined the Congress camp; none can know as I do the real inner mind of the Congress people." Mr. Bhāskarrao Bhosle of Vālha explained the teaching of the Gita (Chapter IX, verse 32), and said he had intended to burn the book at the conference as a protest against this teaching, but he would

refrain from doing so in deference to the advice given by the president and other friends. He did, however, tear the particular chapter in pieces as a symbolical protest. The president wound up the proceedings in a long speech in which "he emphatically exhorted the Untouchables not to run after the Congress," and he also declared in the most emphatic manner, "We are *not* Hindus, —we are Untouchables; we have no sacred book." [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 30-11-1944; *Kāl*, 30-11-1944]. It is particularly worthy of note that great resentment was caused at the conference because the term 'Harijan' had been inadvertently used in the address presented to the president; there were indignant shouts from the audience, "We are not 'Harijans'! We are 'Untouchables'!"

This bitter opposition to the term 'Harijans' is a natural revulsion against what the Untouchables believe to be an insidious attempt to perpetuate their segregation under a new label, 'the people of God (Hari)', calculated to flatter them and to win cheap credit in the eyes of sentimental simpletons in India and elsewhere. This interesting experiment in psychological legerdemain has been strongly condemned by one of the most earnest workers in the field of social reform in Gujarat, Dr. Sumant Mehta, who, although a staunch Congressman, is not very well known even in his own Province because he is not a political mountebank or an unscrupulous self-advertising climber,—and who is moreover too honest and outspoken to be *persona grata* with the Congress hierarchy. In a short but pithy article, Dr. Mehta frankly exposed about a year ago the weaknesses of the Indian political movement, attributed its failure to the extremely narrow communalism, sectarianism and caste consciousness of the politically minded Indians, and wrote: "My experience of the last ten or eleven years shows that we have not been able to win Swaraj simply because of our own weakness, that is to say, unfitness." Then coming to the question of Indian 'nationality', he bluntly declared that "the Indian nation is yet to be born" inasmuch as "a real feeling of equality has not yet been born in us, and that is why the problems of Muslims, Untouchables, etc., have arisen"; and referring to the problem of untouchability he said: "Instead of striving might and main to improve our own behaviour towards the Untouchables, to call them 'Harijans' and thus to try to make the world believe that the Hindu community has the feeling of equality, is an extremely

mistaken policy." [*Hindustan—Prajamitra*, (Divali Number), 29-10-1943].

Many of the above-mentioned sentimental simpletons in and outside India are likely to be scandalised and even shocked by such candid criticisms of the 'Harijan Uplift' movement from the inside. But it is high time we faced facts as they are; and the basic fact about this 'Harijan Uplift' business is that, as I have said before, it is a purely political move, calculated, as the late Mr. M. C. Rajah rightly declared, to keep the Untouchables held securely in the tentacles of the caste Hindu octopus so that they may help to swell the count of heads for political purposes. If the sentimentalists who believe and long to believe that it is a highly spiritual movement of 'self-purification' have still any doubts, let them carefully read Mr. Gandhi's latest 'order of the day' to the army of Congress workers: "Mr. Gandhi, explaining the four resolutions passed by the A. I. S. A. trustees, said the other day: 'The workers of all the five constructive programme institutions (the A. I. S. A., the A. I. V. I. A., *the Harijan Sewak Sangha, the Talimi Sangha* and *the Gosewā Sangha*) should possess such knowledge that *the politics of the whole country may be guided by them*." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 7-12-1944, (Associated Press message).] '*Kyā lutf jo ghair parda khole?*' ('What fun would there be if an outsider should lift the veil?'). I need not, therefore, comment on this totalitarian 'order of the day,' except to ask all who care for their own particular languages and cultures, and who cherish their own traditional and ancestral habits in the matter of food, drink, etc., to note that two of the tentacles of the Congress octopus that are going to "guide the politics of the whole country" are the Talimi (Educational) Sangha and the Gosewā ('Cow-Service') Sangha. This may sound far-fetched and fantastical to those who do not know the sectarian bigotry that has gradually and insidiously been spreading in the Congress machine ever since the institution began to 'spiritualise' Indian politics. I will deal with this interesting aspect of the Congress movement later on. For the present we shall see how the Congress practised 'Harijan uplift' in various other Provinces during the fateful 27 months of its regime.

About the Congress achievements in North India in general, a Patna paper wrote: "So far all that Congressmen have done about Harijan uplift is to pay ceremonial visits to Harijan *bustees* [locations] in one or two places on the occasion of the Gandhi Jayanti

[birthday celebration] which comes once a year. Spectacular road sweeping has also been done once or twice by eminent Congressmen. Last year it was done by Babu Anugraha Narayan Sinha ; this year it was the turn of Dr. Katju." [*Behar Herald*, 22-10-1940.] Swami Kaljuganand, an Untouchable leader of the United Provinces, spoke on the subject of 'Harijans' under Congress rule at a mass meeting held in Bombay on 24-2-1940. Describing the 'Zulums' practised on Untouchables in his Province under 'Congress Raj,' the Swami is reported to have said: "The 'Zulums' perpetrated in Congress Raj are not ordinary 'zulums'; they are such as would make one's brain reel...... We had put up an able member of our community in Allahabad as a candidate at the time of the Assembly elections ; but Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru played a rather shabby part by putting up as a Congress candidate against him his own Chamar shoe cleaner and thus revealed his true policy in a naked form." [This was exactly in the spirit of the Bombay Congress slogans, but Pandit Nehru is reported to have said on 3-10-1940 in a speech at Allahabad: "No substantial good could be done to the Harijans without changing the political structure of the country." (*Behar Herald*, 22-10-1940.) Naturally Panditji expected his own shoe-cleaner to know more about the art and science of overturning political structures than the other candidate.] "In describing the zulums practised on Untouchables in a village in U.P., the speaker said that the houses of these Untouchables were set on fire, they themselves were thrashed, and their property was destroyed. Under Congress Raj the Untouchables possessed no human rights ; there was none to redress their grievances. They can not go about on horse-back [quite rightly : *vide* Manu, X. 51] ; they can not move in bazars without a distinguishing mark (to show that they are Untouchables) [quite rightly again, according to Manu, X. 55.] ; they can not take out marriage processions. When the attention of Pandit Pant [the Congress Premier] was drawn to these zulums, he just shut his eyes and sat tight." [How very like the Bombay 'Pant' (Brahman) Premier !]......" The Congress, dyed deep in Gandhism, makes provision for its own staunch henchmen......The Congress has an income of lakhs, and out of this income are purchased traitors from each and every community." [*Hindustan-Prajamitra*, 27-2-1940]. The last interesting bit of information in the Swami's speech refers evidently to the handful of Untouchable gentlemen like the Pandit's

revolutionary shoe cleaner who profess to be Congressmen. Next, as a commentary on the Swami's speech, it will not be out of place here to give a brief excerpt from a long disquisition headed "A New World Order" by a universally respected leader of U. P. who has always been a staunch Congressman, the venerable sage of Benares Babu Bhagwan Das. In assessing the 20 years' political work of Mr. Gandhi, Dr. Bhagwan Das describes the grim aggravation of the Hindu-Muslim tension, and writes : " As to untouchability, the surface of the problem has been barely touched......But the roots of the problem have not been touched at all. Mutual untouchability and exclusiveness flourish as ever, between the hundreds of high castes themselves, and between the high castes on the one side and the Harijans on the other. The name 'Harijan'......has only emphasised the division between Harijans and non-Harijans, ...and is now being resented by the 'Harijans' as being opprobrious." [*Leader*, 22-12-1940].

And, finally, we have this considered and weighty opinion of a Congress worker, evidently based on first-hand experience of an important centre of Congress managed 'Harijan Uplift' : " It will take some time," writes Munshi Iswar Saran from 'Harijan Ashram,' Allahabad, " before *even the best amongst us begin* to look upon Harijans as an important and integral part of the great Hindu community. *Even the most enlightened amongst us* perfectly unconsciously recognise inwardly the distinction between Harijans and non-Harijans." [*Leader*, 12-9-1940.] This is very mildly put, though the writer clearly and unmistakably places his finger on the root cause of the utter failure of the 'Harijan Uplift' movement, —namely, that the social conscience of caste Hindus, of " even the best" and " most enlightened" amongst them, is so hopelessly callous in this matter that it not only refuses " to look upon Harijans as an important and integral part of the Hindu community," it practicatly refuses even to recognise Untouchables as human beings. The caste Hindus of Mahad had no objection to dogs or pigs drinking water from the Chowdar tank, but as soon as Dr. Ambedkar polluted the tank by his touch its waters had to be purified with those infallible spiritual disinfectants, holy cow's urine and holy cowdung. Surely, if anything requires to be 'uplifted' it is this caste Hindu conscience so as to bring it up to the level of common humanity.

IX

STRENUOUS 'HARIJAN UPLIFT.'

Punjab is not a 'Congress' Province, but the attitude of the Congress leaders there in the matter of 'Harijan Uplift' has been quite in keeping with that of the Congress Ministries in Bombay, or U. P., or Madras. Complaining bitterly about the treatment given to Untouchables in the Punjab—a Province, be it noted, where, owing to pre-Muslim laxness in religious matters, long Muslim predominance and other causes, the caste feeling is not so strong as in other parts of India—Mr. Amin Chand, President, Punjab Political League and Depressed Classes Young Men's Association, wrote to Mr. Gandhi in 1939: "We are driven out of villages like cattle, and if there is any possible way for us to stay there, that is only by serving them like dumb driven animals. The so-called leaders of the Congress in the Punjab are always busy with their party factions and do not pay any attention towards us......In the last election for delegates to the Tripuri Congress not a single representative of the Harijans was taken on the Punjab Congress Election Board and the Working Council." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 21-1-1939.] Unfortunately, Mr. Gandhi's reply to Mr. Amin Chand—if any was given—was not published so far as I know. But we know from the Mahatmic teaching on the grand Natural Law of Caste that the divinely appointed duty of Śudras, and therefore *a fortiori* of 'Harijans', is 'paricharyā,' 'service' of the higher castes. As a dutiful 'Harijan', therefore, Mr. Amin Chand ought not to have complained about the service exacted from his fellow 'Harijans' as it is their natural and lawful duty; if anything, he and they ought to have felt grateful for the magnanimous promotion given to them under the new dispensation from the fifth untouchable caste of 'Panchamas' to the fourth and touchable caste of 'Śudras,' at least on paper, with the additional privilege of being honoured with the highly flattering title of 'Harijans' ('People of God.').

In Bengal also the caste feeling is not so strong as in the Dravidian part of India that lies south of the Vindhya Mountains, including Gujarat and Maharashtra that are Dravidian in almost everything except language. Still the labels 'Jal-chal' and 'Jal-achal' divide the touchable sheep from whom water ('Jal') can be

taken and the untouchable goats from whom it can not be taken without spiritual and physical pollution. In the Patna organ of the three millions of Bengalis long settled in Bihar, a writer from Bengal deplored the fact that the treatment given to the Untouchables in Bengal " has driven them to the communalist camp so that they have made common cause with the enemies of Hinduism," and, protesting against the mockery of calling them ' Harijans,' angrily inquired : " Why in the name of everything ungodly should the Untouchables still be stigmatised in this manner ? " [*Behar Herald*, 1-2-1944.] Another Bengali writer dilated in a couple of very long articles on the inhuman treatment given by caste Hindus to Untouchables, and cited the instance of a temporary servant of his, a Chamar by caste but clean and honest and a willing worker, for whom he failed to secure employmet among all his numerous caste Hindu friends—Congressmen, Arya Samajists, etc., all in need of good reliable servants too !—just because this jewel among servants was a Chamar and therefore Untouchable. Only a Muslim friend was willing to take him up. [*Behar Herald*, 4-1-1944.] In the next issue the writer gave the following typical incident as described by the *Hindusthan Standard* of Calcutta in April 1943 : " At Nadia a Scheduled Caste Hindu dined in a public hotel, but the caste Hindu Khansamas refused to wash his plates and he was asked to wash them himself. On refusal he was roughly handled and thrown out of the hotel. The customer belonged to a respectable family, being the brother of a member of the Bengal [Legislative] Assembly." [*Behar Herald*, 11-1-1944.]

But these endless stock complaints from all over the country about the inhuman treatment of Untouchables pale into utter insignificance when compared with their appalling fate in the recent Bengal famine which was practically brought about mostly by rich Bania and other Gujaratis, Marwadis and Bengali Zamindars. The condition of Bengal Untouchables was thus described in a Congress daily of Bombay : " Mr. P. N. Rājbhoj, General Secretary, All India Scheduled Caste Federation, Mr. S. B. Jādhav, Secretary, Bombay branch of the Federation, and other Scheduled Caste workers of Bombay who were on a tour in different parts of Bengal have issued the following statement to the press :—' The condition of Scheduled Caste people is simply shocking. Many have died, many left their homes in search of food in distant places and God only knows where......On enquiry we learnt that excepting gruel

kitchens, which even have by this time been closed, they have not received any help from any organisation, official or non-official. . . .' [The workers write about hundreds of Untouchables whom they met at Samadhinagar, Dist. Faridpur, and proceed :—] 'All of them repeated the same story,—no relief worth the name came to Scheduled Caste people excepting the gruel kitchens. They told us that the fishermen (Jalias), the tanners (Munchis), and the sweepers (Bhunjimalis),—these communities were on the verge of extinction. Majority of them have died, the few who are still dragging on are facing death due to starvation and attendant diseases.'" [*Bombay Sentinel*, 25-2-1944.] And this is what a high caste Hindu worker, Swami Satyanand, President, Hindu Mission Relief Committee, Calcutta, said in an appeal for funds: "From a careful examination of the informations gathered by the Hindu Relief Committee, it has been found that 90 per cent of the Hindus who died of starvation and attendant diseases belonged to Scheduled Castes. Some of the castes......are facing complete extinction." [*Mahratta*, 3-3-1944.] Commenting on this appeal editorially the leading Congress daily of Bombay said: "But......if it is true that 90 per cent of the victims of the famine are of the Scheduled Castes, it is clear that *untouchability is the root cause of this mass tragedy*, both because it prevents numerous 'Untouchables' from doing any but their hereditary work irrespective of demand for it," [but the paper forgets that all work *must* be hereditary, according to the grand Gandhian Caste Law of Nature !] "and also because untouchability comes in the way of their getting relief promptly and adequately." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 4-3-1944.] And while these unfortunates were dying like flies, our high caste politicians of Congress and other brands were busy making political capital out of the tragedy and putting the blame on the Mlechchha Muslim League Ministry of Bengal ; and the patriotic Congress Banias and Marwadis and Zamindars were performing the doubly patriotic duty of hoarding huge stocks of grains, buying up lands belonging to samll peasant proprietors for a song, making huge profits in Black Markets, and thereby bringing discredit on the Satanic foreign Government. They were also doubly earning eternal merit in the Books of the Great Recorder by spending lavishly on ceremonies, music and nautch parties at Durga Puja etc., and by contributing to political and other funds raised by patriots. I should not be surprised if 80 per cent of the Kasturba

fund also was earned by the patriotic contributors in black markets out of the sweat and blood of the poor and lowly. The candid comments of an ultra-Congress Gujarati paper of Kathiawad on this marvellous ambidexterity of these patriotic Banias etc. in thus worshipping Mammon and squaring God are worth noting here. It had been reported in its columns before the 1943 Durga Puja holidays that the occasion would prove rather lifeless in Bengal in general and Calcutta in particular owing to war, famine, etc. But a Gujarati resident in Calcutta wrote to it contradicting the reports: "These reports are entirely untrue and likely to mislead people.... All public bodies and all Zamindars have as usual celebrated the Puja festivals with full eclat; there have also been feastings and music and nautches at every place. Calcutta is usually expected to spend 8 to 10 lakhs of rupees on the Puja, and this year also it has spent the same amount. Over and above this, on the big day of Puja, the eighth, twenty to twenty-five thousand animals have also been sacrificed. If you think it necessary to make further inquiries in the matter, you can satisfy yourself by making inquiries with Dr. Shyāmā Prasād Mookerjee or Mr. Gaganvihāri Mehta." Commenting with rather heavy irony on this communication from the Calcutta Gujarati, the paper wrote semi-editorially that Gujarat was too puritanical to indulge in naughty nautch and musical parties or to sacrifice thousands of animals, and added: "While we [Gujaratis] are placidly going on with speculation, etc., wars break out......, black markets drag us into themselves, princes and officials make us perforce participate in these sinful money-making sports,—and then money just wilfully sits like a burden on our necks. When God sends earthquakes or famines to lighten this burden on our necks, and when patriots come forward to start funds, we get the opportunity of lightening the burden and earning fresh merit. Therefore, O Bengalis, do just go on celebrating with pomp your Pujas and leave the care of your famines to us alone. Kindly don't begin opening [free] kitchens there; and, you Zamindars, don't start giving sufficient grains to the ryots; for, otherwise, where can we Gujaratis go and earn both spiritual merit and fame?" [*Phulchhāb*, 22-10-1943].

Next we come to the Madras Province, the stronghold of the untouchability mania, where even Mr. Gandhi has been treated as an untouchable. In an article headed 'I am a Nāyar,' contributed to the well known American magazine *Asia*, S. M. Marat (of Erna-

kulam) writes about his homeland: "If you touch a person of lower caste you are polluted, and you become pure again by taking a bath. I have a maternal uncle who is a great admirer of Gandhi and thinks he is the incarnation of God. Once when Gandhi visited our town my uncle determined that he must touch this great saint, ...He came home looking very 'otherworldly.' I asked him if had his thrill. 'It is not a thrill,' he said, deprecating my levity. 'It is good for your soul to touch a great being. But.... I must now go and have a bath......you see Gandhi is not one of our community.'" [*Asia*, October, 1940.] No wonder the strenuous 'Uplift' effort of the Congress Ministry in such a supremely spiritual Province culminated in the spiritual torpedoing of Mr. M. C. Rajah's Temple Entry Bill, wholeheartedly supported and even drafted by the Congress 'Pant' Premier, as we have already seen in two extracts from poor Rajah's bitter complaints. Here is a third extract which calls Mr. Gandhi's Poona fast 'an engine of conversion', repeats the story of 'Harijan' M.L.A.'s belonging to the Congress fold voting under orders from the Congress Premier against "measures introduced for their [the Uutouchables'] special benefit," and adds: "If ever in history there has been a case of 'divide and rule,' it is these tactics of the Congress Ministry. It is a case of political enslavement practised on an unsophisticated people by a highly trained and crafty set of politicians." [*Mahratta*, 8-12-1939.] Poor Rajah! He saw the truth too late.

Addressing the students of the Madras Christian College, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari declared that in 24 out of the 81 Municipalities in the province, Muslims had been elected Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. The *Sunday Observer* pointed out the catch that among these 24 dignitaries only 5 were Chairmen, and wrote: "But the ex-Premier chose to conveniently hide the fact that Brahmins are Chairmen in 24 out of 81 Municipalities, and Vice-Chairmen in 16 of them. That is to say, three per cent of the population get 40 posts,......" [Reproduced in *Star of India*, 31-1-1940.]

Mr. Ramaswamy Naicker, the venerable white bearded leader of Madras Non-Brahmans, gave a list of the other spiritual achievements of the Congress Ministry in his Province in a speech he delivered in Bombay in January 1940, in which he also said that the Ministry had never rebutted these charges. The most noteworthy of these achievements, which, though not bearing directly on the problem of untouchability, clearly show the high and unimpeach-

able 'Brahmanism' of the Ministry,—are: 1. Out of the ten posts in the Ministry,—8 Ministers, 1 Speaker, 1 President of the Legislative Council,—Non-Brahmans who constitute 70 per cent of the population of the Province were given four, while Brahmans who constitute only 3 per cent. of the population got six. 2. Under the pretext of want of funds, 2,200 village schools of the 'Justicites' (*i. e.* Non-Brahmans) were closed; while a special college of Vedic studies for Brahmans was started at the cost of 12 lakhs of rupees. All the lecturers in this college, drawing Rs. 200 to 600 per month, were of course Brahmans. 3. By a special Government Notification, the Congress Ministry ordered that documents presented for registration by persons of the Goldsmith caste should not be registered if they persisted in calling themselves 'Acharya,' that is, indirectly claiming to be Brahmans. [*Vividha Vritta*, 31-11-1943.] In order that the uninitiated may fully appreciate the exquisite esoteric point of the last item, it is necessary to state here that the Goldsmith castes in many provinces of India claim to be Brahmans, and this claim has always been strongly resented by genuine Brahmans. Thus the Goldsmiths of the Madras Province have for centuries claimed (along with several of the other four artisan castes working in copper, iron, wood and stone, all known generally as 'Panchāls' or 'Kammālans,)' to be Brahmans of the 'Daivagna' clan, and have been calling themselves 'Achari' and 'Patthar,' *i.e.*, 'Acharya' and 'Bhatta,' titles generally reserved for real Brahmans who in their turn regard these claimants to Brahmanhood to be no better than Śudras. [Thurston, 'Castes and Tribes of Southern India,' Vol. III, pp. 113, 118, etc.] If the Congress Ministry issued the Notification as publicly declared by Mr. Naicker, it was a rightful Brahmanical move to put the presumptuous Goldsmiths in their proper place,—and it was deliciously reminiscent of the Peshwa regine, too. For the Goldsmiths (or Sonārs) in Maharashtra also have claimed for centuries to be 'Daivadnya' Brahmans, entitled to wear the sacred thread and perform Vedic ceremonies. In the 18th century they were persecuted by the order of the Brahman Peshwa, their sacred threads were snatched away, they were severely punished if they ventured to practise Vedic ritual, and they were forbidden the use of umbrellas and palanquins for bridegrooms in their weddings which had perforce to be performed "at night and in remote places." [Enthoven, 'Tribes and castes of Bombay,' Vol. III, p. 339.] A large number of Daivadnyas emigrated to

Bombay and rose to eminence under the Satanic British; Jagannāth *alias* Nānā Shankarshet, one of the foremost and most respected citizens of Bombay just about a hundred years ago, was a Daivadnya Brahman ; and so is Sir Janārdan Madan, late Adviser to the Governor of Bombay, who, according to our Congress Peshwas and Pant Pradhans, ought at least to have had his sacred thread snatched away during the Congress regime.

X

'NATURAL LAW' OF CASTE IN ACTION.

All the facts we have considered so far, facts attested to mostly by Congress and Nationalist witnesses, point to the inevitable and disturbing conclusion that ever since the Congress went off the rails of sane mundane politics wisely laid by its founders, and spiritualised its political activities, importing into them the dangerous explosive of religion—more dangerous than TNT,—the institution has tended more and more to become sectarian, bigotedly sectarian; and, if it has not become quite Brahman-ridden, it has come to be obsessed by the subtle but all-pervasive spirit of 'Brahmanism.' Later on I will produce even more conclusive evidence to prove this fact. For the present I would ask, as I asked the Congress leader I have already mentioned: "*Was it a mere accident that in all Congress Provinces*, except the overwhelmingly Muslim N. W. F. Province, the Premiers were all Brahmans?" When I put this question to this Congress leader I was surprised to see *him* surprised that this manifestation of the new spiritual alignment of the Congress had not struck him before, although he himself was a Minister in an important Congress Province, and although it was well known that even Indian officials under Congress Governments in certain Provinces had been freely indulging in the jibe that these Governments were being run by "beggars and Brahmans," (*i.e.*, by "Bhikshuks and Bhats".) Angered by such jibes, Mr. Balkrishna Sharma, President, City Congress Committee of Cawnpore (U.P.), wrote in a threatening tone in the local Congress paper, *Pratāp*: "People who might have been misled into thinking that the Congress Government is a spineless Government of beggars and Brahmans, should now be made to feel that it is not lacking in a capacity to rule and to punish." [*Leader*, 1-5-1939.]

But a far more interesting and typical instance of such 'Brahmanism' is provided by the scandalous conspiracy in the Bombay Province against Mr. K. F. Nariman. When this ever smiling Parsi 'Brahman'—(he belongs to the priestly class)—was foully jockeyed out of the Bombay Premiership, with the full and final consent of the Mahatma, the Maharashtra Congressmen at first stoutly refused to stab him in the back at the bidding of the holy

caucus empowered to select the puppet Ministers, especially as these wire-pulling bosses wanted to give the Premiership to a generally disliked bumptious Gujarati careerist; but the Maharashtrians facilely forgot their scruples and joined the spiritual conspiracy against Mr. Nariman as soon as the bait of a Maharashtra Brahman Premier was thrown to them. The astonishing change this simple but effective stratagem wrought in the Marathi press that had so far been loyal to Mr. Nariman was thus described by a Maharashtrian in a Congress daily : " One cannot but condemn the attitude taken up by some of the vernacular newspapers...... Seeing that Mr. Kher, a Maharashtrian, is being made leader of the Congress Party, they have not only preserved a death silence on this issue itself, but have tried to throw mud on the bulk of the sane citizens of Bombay who were trying to right the wrong." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 22-3-1937.] The Maharashtrian papers did something more than preserving a ' death silence ' ; one and all they were jubilant over this victory of Maharashtra Brahmanism. Whether they were ' Socialist ' like the *Chitrā*, or ' Congress ' like the *Navākāl* and *Lokamānya*, or ' Democratic Swarajist ' like the *Kesari*, the *Prabhat* and the *Mouj*, or ' Liberal ' like the *Dnyān-Prakāsh*, or even free-lance and ' anti-Congress ' like the lively *Vividha-Vritta*, they all showed an amazing and unprecedented unanimity in warmly welcoming the choice of a Maharashtrian Brahman as ' Pant Pradhān ' ; the spirit of caste united them when nothing else could do so. The only honourable exception, as far as I know, was a humble ' Sanatanist ' (' Orthodox ') paper which said with admirable regard for truth and decency : " In this black deed, the [Congress] Maharashtrians have blackened their hands and faces......If this is a sample of Congress Swaraj, better if the country does not get such Swaraj." [*Pramod*, 21-3-1937.] As against these Maharashtrian points of view, it is very interesting, and not quite irrelevant, to quote the furious outburst of a Gujarati Congress worker against the Maharashtrians who had not only sold poor Khurshed Nariman for the tinsel gaud of premiership, but also balked Gujarati hopes and ambitions. This Congress worker, Mr. Maganbhai Ishvarbhai Patel, wrote in a leading Congress paper : " Congressmen in Maharashtra......do not want the leadership of a Gujarati, they want the supremacy of Maharashtra. We alone who work with them can know the fractious opposition in counsel that pervades every vein of the Maharashtrians, the intel-

lectual arrogance that permeates their every blood-vessel, the provincial hatred that has made its home in their very bones. Gujarat is in no way inferior to Maharashtra in intellect. Yet, in the aptitude for servitude, flattery, faction-mongering, quarrel-mongering, opposition-mongering, party-making, Gujarat cannot come up to Maharashtra......As the Maharashtrians don't want the leadership of a Gujarati in the Legislative Assembly, they create false opposition......Staunch devotees of the Congress [like us] cannot speak out......The sword of discipline is hanging over us. Keeping it in mind these few words have been written for the sake of justice." [*Bombay Samāchār*, 23-3-1937.] No comments are necessary on these interesting revelations of fierce cross currents of sub-provincial and sub-communal jealousies and hatred, all clearly traceable to the root cause of the hopelessly chronic Indian disunity in general,—deep-rooted communalism based ultimately on caste consciousness. As a personal caveat I must add, however, that though I have known Mr. Nariman for about twenty-five years now, I have never been an admirer of his, and have no reason to believe that this smiling Parsi ' Brahman ' would have proved a better or more efficient or more pliant smiler and Premier than the ever smiling Karhada Brahman.

This ' Brahmanism,' the poisonous flower of the caste system with its exquisitely graded taboos of untouchability, must not be confounded with the noble Brahman ideal of plain living and high thinking, of consciously electing to lead a life of learned poverty, deliberately choosing to scorn delights and live laborious days. This grand ideal has nothing to do with the degrading and baneful ' Brahmanism ' which religiously believes in superiority or inferiority by birth in a high or a low caste, and is based on innumerable Śruti and Smriti texts which culminate in the revolting claim that the vilest and most fallen of Brahmans may be venerated but not the noblest Śūdra. This traditional. Brahmanism and the ineradicable caste consciousness it has engendered and fostered have so absolutely possessed and permeated the Indian and particularly the Hindu mind that the most thoughtful and far-seeing among the Hindus themselves have deplored these evils and unerringly attributed to them the political degradation of India, and most of them have also despaired of seeing the country ever freed from their deadly grip. The venerable Dr. Bhagwan Das of Benares, than whom few more earnest and thoughtful Hindus

have been born in the last one hundred years, writes in just such a despairing mood in a ten column article on the 'Decline of Hinduism': "I have been 'experiencing' the practice of Hinduism from within the pale for seventy years now; and I have often wished that I could go into the fold of some other religion for the advantages of a more sympathetic and solidarian communal social life." He complains that the so-called Hindu 'majority' in India "is not a majority at all, but a crumbling heap of 2,500 [perhaps a misprint for 3,500] absurd minorities mutually untouchable, exclusive, destructive," and proceeds: "So long as Hinduism continues to be in practice what it is, it will continue to deserve every kick that it has got in the past......, every kick that it is getting in the present, every one of the many kicks that it is sure to get in the future. Anti-Hindus are perfectly justified in trying to abolish it from the face of the earth. Such a degraded, degenerate religion does not deserve to live." [*Mahratta*, 19-8-1936.] At the other pole of temperament was the fiery and mercurial Lala Har Dayal, revolutionary and constitutionalist, cosmopolitan and fanatical anti-Muslim by turns. This M. A., Ph.D. (London), wrote years ago: "Caste is the curse of India. Caste, in all its forms, has made us a nation of slaves....It is not Islam, it is not England, that has destroyed India. No, our enemy is within us. Priestcraft [*i.e.*, of course, 'Brahmanism'] and caste have slain us......India can never establish and maintain a free state so long as caste rules in our society......You may deliver speeches, pass resolutions, sign Commonwealth Bills *ad infinitum*, but....caste-ridden Hindus cannot work together, or establish a free state, or create a victorious army." [Quoted in *Mahā-Bodhi* (magazine of Buddhism), November, 1938.]

When we go to a staid and plodding 'social reformer' for guidance in this maze created by these Jeremiahs on the one side and the Mahatmic and other strident champions of caste on the other, we are told: "Communities represent the bedrock of Indian life......The villager, Hindu, Muslim or Christian,......lives, thinks and acts in terms of communal life." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 22-7-1939.] And 'communal' life means 'caste' or 'Birādari life. This sober little paper has for more than a generation fought bravely against caste consciousness; and yet, such is the subtle and mysterious hold of caste on the Hindu mind that only a little while ago its Brahman editor flared up against Dr. Ambedkar for

condemning caste Hinduism, cited the modern Western Aryan 'Rishis' Birdwood, Meredith Townsend and Patrick Geddes in defence of the four caste system, and descanted eloquently on the "inestimable service to society" rendered in India by this "ancient institution." [*Ibid*, 12-2-1944.] But in one of its many moments of normal lucidity the paper has rightly gone to the root of the matter in a remarkable defence of the Indian, and particularly Hindu, attitude of indifference to the outcome of the present world war. It frankly admitted the surprisingly and blankly non-political trend of Hindu culture and said: "The principal reason why Indian [meaning, of course, Hindu] evolution did not take a political turn like that of ancient Rome......was the belief in the doctrine of Karma. No government or ruling class but one's own past actions were responsible for one's present misfortune." [Which reminds me of what I heard the Police Chief of a petty State say with pathetic resignation to his angry Prince: "Raīs rūthā to muqaddar rūthā!"—which means in effect, "the wrath of the Ruler is the wrath of Destiny." But to proceed with our Reformer:] "One cannot improve his lot by overthrowing the rulers...... This indifference to politics fostered by Indian metaphysics (it is as observable among highly educated Indians as among illiterate villagers) was reflected faithfully in the socio-political system. The function of adapting the customary regime to changing conditions was reserved to the autonomous caste and village community, and the sovereign's part was that of keeping the peace and guarding the frontiers." [*Ibid.*, 15-6-1940.] This is sound history, but it leaves out an important part of the sovereign's duty according to traditional Hindu law and custom; innumerable legal texts, copper-plate grants, inscriptions, etc., shew that an important function of the Hindu king was to see that every one of his subjects strictly adhered to caste laws, and to punish any one who transgressed them. In fact, Caste is the bed-rock on which Hindu culture and polity are based. As a thoughtful columnist in the Allahabad daily put it trenchantly in criticising some speakers on Hindu culture at a public meeting who had 'condemned the caste system': "Those who did so, perpetrated gross self-contradiction. 'Hindu culture' devoid of the 'caste system' would not be Hindu at all. However irrational the 'caste system' may have become ......we cannot deny that the caste system forms the very basis of Hinduism." [*Leader*, 8-11-1940.] This is exactly why poor

Dr. Bhagwan Das wished in his almost heart-broken lament to go out of the Hindu fold; and this is exactly why I said, in criticising the *Bombay Chronicle* article headed "Caste Must Go," that 'if caste goes Hinduism goes.' Caste has been for about thirty centuries now the sole yard measure for surveying in India any field of activity, social or religious, economic or political. And even today it is the main dynamic that motivates and energises, and also spiritualises, our activities in the otherwise Satanic democratic institutions borrowed from the West; and that is why as a rule our voting is soundly based on considerations of caste and community. This is what a mofussil Congress paper says about the elections that brought Congress into power: "It has been the experience everywhere that voters have been animated in their voting by loyalty to caste or blind communalism." [*Prāgatika*, 23-2-1937.] Another Marathi paper had said earlier in clearer terms: "It is unfortunate that in India elections are fought on the principle of caste. The voter thinks more of his caste than of India......For instance, in the last municipal elections in Bombay city, it was noticed that Parsis voted for Parsis, Brahmans for Brahmans, Sāraswats for Sāraswats, Prabhus for Prabhus, Untouchables for Untouchables." [*Navashakti*, 1-3-1935.] The exquisite distinction the writer here makes between 'Brahmans' and 'Sāraswats'—a Brahman caste whose Brahmanism was challenged and resented by the Poona Peshwas, and is still doubted by other Maharashtrian Brahmans—shows that he himself was caste-ridden, a fact which only strengthens his and my argument. Even a Congress Minister, Mr. A. B. Latthe, wrote in a Congress paper: "Ordinarily a Brahman votes for a Brahman and a Non-Brahman votes for a candidate of his own community." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 12-6-1940.] In his time Mr. Latthe, himself a Jain and editor of the *Pragati and Jinavijaya*, was almost notorious for his anti-Brahman virulence. But this, too, only strengthens my argument. Coming to more earnest and sincere followers of the Congress than Mr. Latthe who donned the white cap for the ministership, this is what Mrs. Sarojini Mehta, M.A., wrote ten years ago in a Congress-minded magazine: "The power of castes has not at all been weakened; on the contrary, castes are consolidating their power in other fields. In municipal or Legislative Assembly elections, in bestowing posts, and in many such other matters, people help only their fellow castemen, but not a man of any other caste however better fitted he may be." [*Pras-*

thān, Māgshar, 1991 V. S. (November-December 1934).] And finally this is what Dr. Sumant Mehta said only a year ago in the article I have already quoted from : " In elections for the University Senate or other bodies......, do the voters give their votes only to the best fitted persons ? Not at all. Do they vote then for their own political party ? They may not ; it often happens that Pātidārs vote for Pātidars, Anāvlās for Anāvlās, Muslims for Muslims." [*Hindustan-Prajāmitra*] (Diwali Number), 29-10-1943.] Well, if caste is a grand Law of Nature that is going to conquer the whole world, as the Mahatma assures us so positively and confidently, is it not only right and natural that it should triumph in democratic elections too ?

XI.

CASTE, NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM.

For more than a hundred years now some of the most eminent and thoughtful Hindus have been inveighing, under the influence of the Satanic West no doubt, against this ancient institution of caste by birth, this ineluctable Law of Nature so carefully defined, so religiously believed in, and so stoutly defended by Mr. Gandhi. And most leaders and students of Hindu thought have been attributing to it the political weakness of India—Hindu India—through more than twenty-five centuries, due to lack of any sense of nationality, and of even community and cohesion, in the internally discordant, vertically and horizontally divided, Hindu communion. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first eminent Indian to want and fight for English education, wrote about a hundred years ago: "The distinction of castes, introducing innumerable divisions and subdivisions among them [the Hindus] has entirely deprived them of patriotic feeling." [Quoted in *Modern Review*, November, 1933.] In Western India, V. K. Chiplunkar, an elder contemporary of Tilak, a Brahman of Brahmans, and like Tilak (as well as Mr. Gandhi) a great champion of nationalism *cum* orthodox reaction against Satanic 'modernism,' contrasted the history of India with that of Rome, Greece, etc., and wrote about seventy years ago: "This important thing must be borne in mind first that in countries on our side people practically do not know the very idea of patriotism"; and he added that the vastness of this country and caste divisions have been the two main reasons why the sense of patriotism has been lacking in India. ['Vishṇupadi,' pp. 524 and 526.]

In his famous book on 'Hindu Sangathan,' the great Hindu Sabha leader Bhai Parmanand refers to western democratic states and writes: "We must admit that this form of democratic government was not common in our country. The spirit of the Caste and Ashrama systems [*i.e.*, 'Varṇaśrama' so passionately championed by Mr. Gandhi] is opposed to the democratic form of Government." [English translation by Lalchand Dhavan (1936), p. 139.] Later on, bitterly denouncing the tyranny of custom in Hindu life, he cries out: "The particles of sand do not possess any power of cohesion ......The Hindus, scattered as they are like the grains of sand,

are very hard to unite." [*Ibid.*, p. 226.] The famous Bengali patriot Bepin Chandra Pal wrote twenty-five years ago: "India is really not a country but a continent. We are not, honestly speaking, one people, but a conglomeration of many peoples. It is no use denying these actualities." [*Hindusthan Review*, Jan.-March, 1929.] And, as is usual with most of our patriots, by 'we' Mr. Pal meant the Hindus. In an article contributed to the 'Congress Number' of the leading Congress daily of Bombay, seventeen years ago, Sir Hari Singh Gour asked, "What do we lack as a nation?" —and answered laconically, "the feeling of nationality." [*Bombay Chronicle*, Congress Number, December, 1927]. Here, too, 'we' means the Hindus. And addressing a select audience of Hindus in London a dozen years later, Sir Hari Singh denounced the caste system as Enemy No. 3 of Hinduism. [*Bombay Chronicle*, 26-5-1939.] Mr. Gandhi declared in his paper a few years ago: "I regard untouchability as the root cause of our downfall." [*Harijan*, 25-5-1940.] Commenting on this dictum, the famous Bengali Congressman and publicist, Mr. Ramananda Chatterji, wrote editorially in his well known magazine: "Untouchability is only the worst feature and fruit of the caste system, and hence caste must be pronounced one of the main causes of India's downfall." [*Modern Review*, June, 1940.] But the most startlingly convincing confession—in a way it is also a bitter confession of personal failure—comes from the greatest Indian politician and publicist of the age himself when he says: "India's masses have no national instinct developed." [*Harijan*, 15-3-1942, quoted in *Sunday Observer*, 19-4-1942.] "Chu kufr az Ka'ba angīzad kujā mānad Musalmāni?" ["If heresy proceed from the Holy of Holies (Ka'ba) itself, where can the True Faith survive?"] It must be noted by the way, however, that if Mr. Gandhi means to imply that, if not the masses, at least the classes have 'developed' the 'national instinct,' he is indulging in a fond delusion. The caste and communal 'instinct' is far more 'developed' in our classes and intelligentsia than even in our masses; and our 'nationalism' is only skin deep.

Turning now from publicists and politicians, let us see what earnest students and scholars of Indian sociology and historians of repute—all good Hindus and staunch nationalists, too,—have to say on the subject of caste. The late S. V. Ketkar was a Brahman of Brahmans, accused by many of his Maharashtrian critics of being

a bigoted 'Chitpāvan,' and yet he has said in his secod volume on Indian castes: "Hindu society is divided into watertight compartments of over three thousand castes and of many more sub-castes. The result is disunion of the people, the worst type the world has ever seen." And further, "Hinduism did not produce any idea of nationality." ['An Essay on Hinduism,' pp. 133, 134.] P. G. Sahasrabuddhe, M.A., lays down five tests of nationhood, *viz.*, common race, common religion, common history and traditions, common language and common opportunities for all, and says that if these tests are applied to the Hindu nation it can not pass even one of them; not only so, but the religious teachings of the Hindus run counter to these tests. The writer concludes: "I do not think that such a Hindu nation ever existed in the past or can come into existence in the future." [*Chitramaya Jagat*, October, 1935.] And the same cheerless doom is pronounced by Mr. Bijoy Kumar Banerjee in his book called 'Imperial India.' We are told by a reviewer that "Mr. Banerjee asserts that India had never been and never will be a nation." [*Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 24-9-1944.]

Professor Beni Prasad, again, who was reported to have had long interviews with Mr. Gandhi a few weeks ago, rightly says in his careful study of the Hindu-Muslim problem that "caste has not allowed Hindu society to acquire that degree of homogeneity...... which the institution of classes......has permitted to modern France, Britain and other communities." ['Hindu-Muslim Question,' p. 3.] And tracing the working of the caste idea to its lateral but logical conclusion, he writes with rare candour: "Caste engenders the mentality of hierarchy, of inequality, and of appointed stations. It makes various groups of Hindus feel uneasy among themselves; *it projects itself into the inter-communal relations and awakens grave misgivings in the minds of minorities.*" [*Ibid.*, p. 104.] The ominous but courageously outspoken dictum italicised by me will be amply illustrated later on when I deal with the recent orientation of the Congress itself as a new 'caste,' with its own doctrinal ideology, its own socio-religious code of strict regimen in the matter of 'pure' food, 'national' dress, 'national' language, etc. Here I shall quote only one passage, generally illustrative of the Congress 'Caste' Hindu mentality, from Professor Beni Prasad's fairly objective study of Hindu-Muslim relations, and then add only one striking concrete example showing how caste "projects itself into the inter-communal relations" as acutely diagnosed by the

Professor: " It was the fear of the future that weighed heavily on the Muslim mind in 1937. Its misgivings were roused afresh by the incorporation of certain party symbols into the practice of Congress legislatures and executives. The Congress majorities insisted not merely on hoisting the Congress flag on certain buildings but also on the singing of the intensely Sanskritised 'Bande Mataram' song to inaugurate the legislative sessions. Soon afterwards, the Congress Government of the Central Provinces persisted in a designation, 'Vidyamandir,' ......for a certain type of school in the teeth of keen opposition from the Musalmans and yielded at last only [to] a campaign of passive resistance. The Muslims resented the increasing abandonment of Urdu by the Hindus and were set a-thinking by the warm advocacy of the cause of Hindi, as distinct from Urdu, by some prominent leaders in the U.P., the C.P., and Bihar." [*Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.]

The concrete example I give next may look like a digression, but it is a quite pertinent digression in as much as it aptly and exactly illustrates some of the points touched upon by Dr. Beni Prasad in his general strictures. In the *Times of India* (18-10-1944) appeared a letter headed 'Who Creates Pakistan?' exposing the uniquely spiritual action of the Congrees municipal party in the Allahabad Municipal Board in throwing overboard, at the very last moment, their own candidate for the post of Executive Officer, simply because he was a Musalman although a good and tried Congressman himself and own brother to the well-known Congress leader of U. P., Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwāi. By a happy chance, there was published on the next page of the same paper a characteristic statement by the well known and well self-publicised patriot of Bombay, Mr. K. M. Munshi, dilating eloquently on the evils of Pakistan. The patriot rightly and righteously condemned the " religious fanaticism " and the " out of date religious nationalism " of Mr. Jinnah's Muslim League and the " old world philosophy " underlying the Pakistan idea, and wrote: " While the Congress stands for territorial nationalism, politico-economic and non-religious, the Muslim League seeks an out of date religious nationalism." And like a Daniel come to judgment, Mr. Munshi concluded in his usual inimitable English: " Hence lies the incompatibility of an agreement." The sentiments were quite unexceptionable even though Mr. Munshi's hall-marked English was not.

Now contrast these unexceptionable sentiments of Mr. ' Jekyll ' Munshi, the ' territorial,' ' politico-economic ' and ' non-religious ' nationalist and patriot, with the following choice samples of ' out of date religious nationalism ' and ' religious fanaticism,' bigoted Brahmanism and rank communalism, culled mostly from the Gujarati masterpieces of the versatile Mr. ' Hyde ' Munshi. Only a few months before issuing the statement, Mr. Munshi had proclaimed the historially non-existent Vikrama as the ' national ' hero of all India, and his ' territorially patriotic ' bowels had yearned powerfully for the mythical ' Golden Age ' of that mythical hero and protagonist of militant Hinduism. A few years earlier he had as rapturously yearned for the ' Golden Age ' of Samudragupta, and longed with all his ' territorially patriotic ' heart to revive the code of Yājnavalkya and specially that provision of it under which 'non-Aryans ' seducting or abducting ' Aryan ' women could be awarded capital punishment. [' Gujarat Ek Sāmskārika Vyakti ', pp. 218-221.] And just about a year ago he reiterated (in inimitable English again) the same Aryan sentiment in a less bloodthirsty manner in his paper with its ungrammatical name, *' The ' Social Welfare :* " The Hindu women all over India require institutional [*sic*] protection. Aryan culture has to be captured afresh in order to suit the exigencies of modern life." [Quoted in *Dawn*, 14-1-1944.] Early in 1943 Mr. Munshi had been severely castigated in two Ahmedabad papers, the *Jyotirdhar* and the *Prajābandhu*, for his arrogant and aggressive Brahmanism,—though it was not at all a new offence in as much as for many years now he has been spouting his obstreperous faith in the innate superiority and natural leadership of the ' Bhūdevā ' [' God on earth '), the Brahman. [' Ādivachano ', p. 84, etc.] His Gujarati rhapsodies overflow with this nauseatingly arrogant Brahmanism, and insinuate his amusingly absurd claim to be a direct descendant of Bhrigu Rishi and of Bhārgava-Rāma, the dread ' Rāma with the Axe '—Paraśurāma—whose axe the present lineal descendant of these mythical heroes has adopted as his coat of arms along with a more appropriate crowing cock. Mr. Munshi has proudly declared that the Brahman has been the prime factor in enabling the Hindu nation to defy and resist foreign rule. ['Gujarat-ni Asmitā ', p. 48.] With intense satisfaction he has repeatedly dwelt upon the ' cultural non-co-operation ' practised by the Hindus against their Muslim rulers ; and he has exultingly described how the Muslim Sultan was practically treated as an

Untouchable, and how even his Hindu minister had to take a purifying bath after coming home from the Darbar of the untouchable Muslim King. [Ibid., p. 57.] He has expatiated on the 'terrible tyranny' of the 'Muslim conquerors', and again gone into raptures over the 'social aloofness,' *i.e.*, boycott, resorted to against these tyrants by the Hindus. [*Ibid.*, p. 144.] In a later pronouncement (in 1940) he has described with deep gratification and pride the unceasing antagonistic struggle kept up by the Hindus against the Muslims, first in the shape of 'constant warfare' and secondly by way of 'social and cultural antagonism,' *i.e.*, boycott. ['Ādivachano' (1943), p. 362.]

But Mr. Munshi's brilliant sallies in the field (or, rather, no man's land) of India's 'national' language provide even more amusing and revealing instances of his "territorial politico-economic nationalism." In 1936 he said in one of his pompous annual pronunciamentos: "Simple Sanskrit alone, depending on the principle of Hindi-Hindustani, can be the literary language of the nation today." [*Ibid.*, p. 126.] That is how I translate this gem of profound scholarship, though I confess I cannot fathom its profound meaning; in fact, I doubt if even Mr. Munshi himself can. A couple of years later, however, as a Congress Minister he was in duty bound to drop 'simple Sanskrit' and adopt as part of the Congress creed the hotchpotch jargon known as 'Congress Hindustani.' And now in 1944 he actually reviles this Congress jargon and perfervidly advocates fully Sanskritised Hindi which he says is, and is going to be, the language of the 'Indian nation,' especially as all the vernaculars of the Hindus all over India are highly Sanskritised. [*Bombay Chronicle*, 28-9-1944.] All this 'territorially patriotic' prattle can only mean that the Hindus alone constitute the Indian nation! Here let us leave this intriguing duck-billed platypus of Indian politics who defies classification like that zoological puzzle of Australia, and return to our historians.

The eminent historian, Professor R. C. Majumdar, who has been Vice-Chancellor of Dacca University and is at present editing Mr. K. M. Munshi's 'nationalist' and 'territorially patriotic' history of India, wrote about eighteen years ago in his excellent text book of ancient Indian history: "......the rigidity of the caste system in India kept the class [*sic*] interests perpetually alive, and true national sentiment was never awakened in the minds of the people." ['Outline of Ancient Indian History,' (1927), p. 574.]

caste that really counts, the division that is a living force, is the subdivision and sub-subdivision into innumerable small groups." ['House of Shivaji,' p. 73.] And comparing Shivaji's times with our own he writes : " The same forces, the same beliefs, the same false pride in blood, are operating among us to-day. Without the completest freedom of marriage within a population......that population can never form a nation." [*Ibid.*, p. 75.] In an earlier work on Shivaji Sir Jadunath wrote, " ' Caste grows by fission.' It is antagonistic to *national union* " ; and he went on to quote the searing, devastating doom pronounced by Rabindranath Tagore in his Bengali 'Rise and Fall of the Sikh Power': " A temporary enthusiasm sweeps over the country and we imagine that it has been united ; but the rents and holes in our body-social do their work secretly ; we can not retain any idea long..... It is beyond the power of any man, it is opposed to the divine law of the universe, to establish the Swaraj of such a caste-ridden, isolated, internally torn sect over a vast continent like India." [' Shivaji and His Times,' pp. 483-484.] And quoting these sombre judgments of Sarkar and Tagore in connection with Mr. Gandhi's fast, Mr. Ramanand Chatterji wrote in a foot-note : " How happy should we be if it were never necessary to make any such observation on the present wave of enthusiasm against untouchability ! " [*Modern Review*, November, 1932.] This half wistful half ironically apprehensive stage aside seems to show that Chatterji was not quite unconscious of the fact that under the temporary maudlin ' wave of enthusiasm ' created by the coercive Poona fast lay hidden the eternally steadfast rock of the grand Natural Law of Caste.

XII.

CASTE AND CONGRESS HIERARCHY.

Even those who condemn caste and profess to have outgrown the caste idea, do not, as a rule, put their professions into practice when the time for action comes. Almost all educated persons, especially the young among them, glibly say " caste is practically gone," or " caste is going " ; but when the marriage season arrives even those who bravely profess ' socialism ' and ' communism ' on the platform or in the press submit as a rule very tamely to caste discipline. Dr. Chandulal Desai, a Congress leader of Broach, rightly said in a speech delivered in Bombay on 9-2-1936 : " At present an atmosphere of hypocrisy is spreading all round...... Young men who lecture on progressive reforms in castes, slip away when the time for action comes and under various excuses submit to evil practices in order to keep their caste people pleased. This hypocrisy affects political activities also." [*Hindustan-Prajamitra*, 10-2-1936.] The eminent chemist and patriot Sir P. C. Ray used to complain bitterly that our young men go to jail for a hollow political slogan, but will not dare to marry outside their little caste or sub-caste. As the founder of the Jāt Pāt Toṛak Manḍal (caste breaking association) of Lahore put it even more pointedly : " The Hindu young man has religiously become a free thinker and atheist, and boasts of his irreligiousness, yet he is socially very narrow-minded......His whole social life......is strictly communal and limited to the narrow circle of his own caste. He has not the courage to marry out of his caste......" [*Leader*, 3-4-1941.] Another writer said in the same paper : " The Hindus, incuding even those who, like the Arya Samajists, condemn caste, cling to their castes like parasites." [*Leader*, 20-8-1941.] Thus when a Chamar student in the Arya Samajist D. A. V. College at Cawnpore joined the college hostel, the high caste students protested and the hostel servants also refused to wash his plate, etc., with the result that the untouchable Chamar boy had to leave the hostel. [*Pandit*, (Cawnpore), 26-2-1934, quoted in *Dharma-mangalā*, 3-4-1934.]

In the Madras Province, the District Board President, Tanjore, tried a few years ago to introduce a common mess for Brahmans and non-Brahmans in the Tiruvadi Oriental College. The Editor

of the *Sunday Observer* of Madras informs me that this move was opposed even by such shining lights of Liberalism as the Rt. Hon. V. S. Sastri, Mr. T. R. Venkatarama Sastri and Mr. G. A. Natesan. " My point has been," adds the Editor, " that these Liberal politicians who claim to be Nationalists are the worst anti-national and anti-social elements in the public life of this country." This is a strikingly significant example of our deep-seated 'Brahmanism.' Even more significant is the famous case of the proposed common mess and dining hall for the Bangalore Science Institute, that shook all South India in the first quarter of 1943. The Director of this foremost all-India centre of post-graduate scientific studies and research intended originally to have a common mess and a common dining hall to be built for all resident students; and all recent entrants had given in writing when joining the hostel that they would raise no objection to the proposed messing arrangements. But when the foundation of the dining hall began to be dug, the caste students objected not only to the common mess, but even to dining in the same hall with others, although the Director, rather weakly, offered to allot them a separate corner of it, all to themselves; they could not and would not dine in their corner unless it was partitioned off and thus spiritually insulated against even the polluting glances and sight of the non-caste rabble. In order to enforce their spiritual birthright, they took a leaf out of the Mahatmic book; they went on strike, fasted, sat 'dharna' in the foundation dug for the caste-polluting hall. And in this righteous and holy fight against sight and look pollution, these picked science graduates, the flower of several Indian Universities, found their staunchest champion in that most patriotically minded and ultra-nationalist paper, the *Hindu* of Madras. Although all these martyrs in the sacred cause of Caste had given a written undertaking when entering the hostel that they would join the common mess, the Madras champion of patriotic and nationalist Brahmanism wrote a long leading article stoutly defending their " religious scruples and customary prejudices " and said with unanswerable logic: "......the authorities should see the absurdity of coercing anybody in such matters, involving deep religious convictions, *much less post-graduate students who may be depended upon to judge for themselves what is best for them.*" [*Hindu*, 16-3-1943]. This is superb logic, coming as it does from an ardent champion of 'Akhand Hindustan' nationalism and radical democracy: these post-graduate science research stu-

dents " know what is best for them " when they blindly uphold senseless caste taboos, and the fiercely democratic *Hindu* in its ripe political wisdom admires and blesses their right judgment. No wonder a cynic cried out on reading this wonderful defence of rank Brahmanism : " Long live ' Akhand Hindustan ' ! Brahman democracy ki jai ! "

Anyhow, there is little doubt that this highly spiritual Brahman democracy of Madras has, by these democratic methods, done exceptionally well for itself from the temporal point of view also, as is strikingly shewn by the figures given in a memorandum submitted to the Madras Government in December, 1943, by the Madras Provincial Backward Classes League : out of 2,200 gazetted posts in the Province, the Brahmans who form 3 per cent. of the total population monopolise 820, *i.e.*, a modest 37 per cent. of the posts,—while the Backward and Depressed Classes constituting 64 per cent. of the population get 75, *i.e.*, a little over 3 per cent. of the posts. Perhaps this is a natural and just reward for the extremely high spirituality of the Province which is unequalled by any other Province in our essentially spiritual land ; witness the dizzy spiritual height on which the highest class Madras Brahman, the flower of Malabar Brahmanism, the Nambutiri, stands even when compared with other high class Brahmans like the Śaiva ' Aiyars ' and Vaishṇava ' Aiyangaṛs.' The Nambutiri will, as far as possible, avoid all contact with such less spiritual beings ; he will avoid pouring out any liquid from his own vessel into that of even an ' Aiyar ' or ' Aiyangar ' for fear of stream contact and consequent pollution. A highly educated ' Aiyar ', who has been a lecturer in two South Indian Universities, has assured me that if a Nambutiri condescends to pour milk or water into an Aiyar's or any other Brahman's cup from his own, he will do so with exquisite jerks which break the continuous (and therefore polluting) stream, and this action is technically known as " dhāra murikkuga ', ' stream-breaking.' No wonder that in such a phenomenally spiritual Province poor Rajah's Temple Entry Bill received the typically spiritual ' murikkuga ' from the Brahman Congress Premier who thus proved himself to be the ' best friend ' of the Untouchables according to our Mahatma.

At the other end of India, and also of Brahman spirituality, stand the Kashmiri Sāraswat Brahmans who have always been fond of good cheer, including animal food and liquor , as the late R. S. Pandit himself a Maharashtra Sāraswat, says in his translation of the

famous chronicle of Kashmir, 'Rājataraṅgiṇi': "The Kashmir Brahman is a lover of meat and fish and in ancient times grape wine was in common use. The Nilamata Purana mentions the use of wine by Brahmans for ceremonial purposes." ['R. T.', p. 465.] There is nothing new or surprising in this, and as a matter of fact it is quite in the real Aryan and Vedic tradition; for, in quite a number of the most important Vedic sacrifices both beef and liquor were absolutely necessary, being holy sacraments to be partaken of by the sacrificer and the officiants. But with all that, and inspite of the veneer of modernism and Western culture, the spirit of Brahmanism has not departed from the Kashmiri Brahmans as the following striking instances will show. A highly educated lady holding a responsible position writes to me in a recent communication, confirming what she had told me a couple of years ago: "At the All India Women's Conference held at Delhi in the Xmas of 1940, Mrs. Brijlal Nehru addressed the women at an open session, in her capacity as Vice-President of the Conference and as Vice-President of the 'Jāt Pāt Toṛak Sangh,' and exhorted them to help the object of the Sangh by refusing at the next Census to give any returns of caste, sub-caste etc. There was a certain amount of discussion on the subject. One of the women who disapproved of the idea was Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit who [said she] did not see why she should not be proud of her high Brahman blood and declare herself as a Brahman at the Census......Many of us there were surprised at the attitude of Mrs. Pandit as the All India Conference is above caste or creed, at least according to its constitution." And, I need scarcely add, Mrs. Pandit belongs to the Congress hierarchy.

I would, if I could, refrain from giving the next instance of 'Brahmanism,' but I am constrained to do so as it shows how this 'Brahmanism,' which is the very essence of communalism and caste, works among persons who claim to have discarded all ideas of caste and even creed and who belong to the highest Congress hierarchy. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is professedly a 'socialist' and even a 'communist,' a scoffer at religion and at all religions, but in practice he has demonstrated the truth of his own grim dictum: "Like the Old Man of the Sea, religion has mounted our backs and effectively prevents all progress and advancement." [*Mahratta*, 1-4-1928; and many other papers.] For, several papers ribaldly scoffed at his professed socialism, communism and atheism when he performed his father's obsequies standing waist deep in the holy river at

Prayag, clad only in dhoti and sacred thread. And when his daughter married a Parsi, the marriage did not, as one would expect, take place under the Civil Marriage Act, but was solemnised with a specially devised 'Vedic' ceremony, specially approved and blessed by the Mahatma. The following description, under the noteworthy heading 'Vedic Ceremony—Emphasis on National Aspect,' appeared in the Allahabad advocate of Indian 'nationalism': "The entire ceremony was according to Vedic rites ......The marriage formula adopted by Professor Lachhmidhar Sastri has the approval of M. Gandhi also. It brings into prominence the national aspect of the ceremony." [*Leader*, 27-3-1942.] Part of the 'nationalism' consisted in the brandishing of a sword by the bride. Evidently this 'Vedic' ritual and sword brandishing is here declared to be 'national'; and I should not be surprised if, as part of this 'nationalism,' the fortunate bridegroom was also made to put on a dhoti, which is certainly regarded by many prominent Congress leaders as the real Vedic 'national' costume of India. I subjoin, again rather reluctantly, the natural reaction in a Non-Brahman paper to this 'national' mummery: "Pandit Nehru is a rationalist, an atheist. He is a votary at the shrine of Moscow. He is an internationalist. But Miss Indira Nehru's marriage was performed according to 'Vedic rites'! Mr. Firoz Gandhi......has no doubt become a Brahman. According to Sastras [and, by the bye, according to our national Mahatma also] a Brahman is born but never made. Evidently the Sastras have been changed." [*Sunday Observer*, 29-3-1942.] Even more reluctantly I reproduce the rather brutal strictures of a 'Student of Dharma-Śāstra' published prominently in a 'nationalist' paper whose orthodoxy was hurt past bearing by the marriage: "It is well that Miss Indira is going to marry a Parsi gentleman. If perchance she had married some Harijan of Mahatma Gandhi, who could have stopped her? And who could have interfered if Mahatma Gandhi had sent her double blessings therefor?" [*Gujarati*, 22-3-1942.] I would not have reproduced this vulgar outburst were it not an unerring pointer to the real caste Hindu feeling about the Untouchables; it clearly shows how in the eyes of caste Hindus *even a non-Hindu is less intolerable in such a predicament than the despised and hated Untouchable.* Nothing could better prove my contention that the Untouchables are 'Hindus' only in a conventional sense and will never be absorbed and assimilated into the Hindu communion even as a

separate caste, even if the Untouchables themselves, split up as they are into scores of exclusive and mutually untouchable communities, could ever become one caste.

The 'Brahmanism' and caste prejudices of men and women high in the Congress hierarchy reveal themselves in most unexpected ways. There is the well-known case of Tilak who in an unguarded moment blurted out his inward utter contempt for the 'plebs,' the lower castes, whose 'Tribune' he was supposed to be: "What are Telis (oil-pressers) and Tambolis (panwalas) going to do by entering the Councils?" He meant that they would better stick to their lasts, leaving politics to Brahmans, etc. Exactly the same contempt for such despised low castes was expressed a few years ago by Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel,—although he is himself a mere 'plebeian' from the caste Hindu point of view, being a Kunbi, *i.e.*, a mere Śūdra. In his usual elegant and cultured manner he once said in a speech at Ahmedabad, trying to pour withering contempt upon the hated leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League: "The Viceroy sent for the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, he sent for the leaders of the Muslim League, and he sent for Ghānchis (oil-pressers), Mochis (cobblers), and the rest." It is necessary to explain for the information of the uninitiated that from times immemorial the oil-presser has been regarded as particularly unclean although not quite untouchable; hence the double term 'Ghānchi-Mochi' has come to convey far deeper contempt than the English and French words 'rabble' and 'canaille'; it is only a shade or two less contemptuous and abusive than the terms 'Mahar-Chamar' and 'Dhed-Bhangi' used in the infamous Congress slogans we have noted before. Now the Ghānchis of Surat, however, are—thanks to the Satanic British rule—a well to do class of some local importance, and consequently several young Ghānchis of Surat, enraged by Mr. Patel's amenities, wrote angry letters to him and to Mr. Gandhi strongly protesting against the insulting reference to their caste in the non-violent speech. [*Hindustan-Prajamitra*, 11-11-1939.]

The 'Bulbul' of the Congress, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, who is by birth a Brahman though married to a Śūdra, was guilty of a more serious *faux pas* when she used the word 'Bania' as a term of inexpressible contempt. She presided over the 20th Punjab Political Conference held at Lahore in 1935 in connection with the 'Nationl Week,' and, according to an Associated Press message:

"She said it was Punjab......who had given the lead to India to raise her head among free nations ; but today Sikhs were acting as anything but the brave people they were, and Hindus were wrangling like the meanest Banias for a seat [in the Councils] here and a seat there." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 8-4-1935.] There was nothing startling or unusual in what Mrs. Naidu said, or in the contemptuous and abusive connotation she put on the word 'Bania.' Since Vedic times the Vaiśya (the ancient scriptural equivalent of the modern 'Bania ') has been looked down upon and degraded almost to the level of the Śūdra, as we have seen before. But with all that, the blundering 'Bulbul' did not realise that she was warbling or twittering a most heinous apostatical heresy ; she seems to have lost sight of the awful fact that the Avatar whom she professes to worship is himself a 'Bania.' However that may be, the illustrations given above show how strong and deep rooted are 'Brahmanism' and caste prejudices in the minds of the highest members of the Congress hierarchy who, outwardly at least, even disown and revile caste. Rightly has Professor D. V. Potdar of Poona said : "In India the caste feeling is in the very blood of all people. However much some persons may aver as a matter of intellectual belief that they have given up—and that we must give up—caste, rarely can it be said about any one that he has really forgotten the caste feeling." ['Arvāchīna Marathi Sāhitya' (a symposium), p. 349.]

XIII.

CASTE-HINDUISATION OF THE CONGRESS.

Ever since the Congress spiritualised its politics under the guidance of Mr. Gandhi, the organisation has gradually assumed the colour and complexion of a caste, perceptibly a Hindu caste. This may sound fantastic to outsiders, and even to such Indians as stand too near the Congress to see it in proper perspective, especially owing to their attitude of uncritical devotion, or too far from it to be able to scrutinise its less publicised activities. In 1940, the Sikh leaders Master Tarasingh and Sardar Sampuran Singh attended a certain dinner given and attended by non-Congress celebrities, and this heretical act led to a controversy between Master Tarasingh and the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who objected to persons claiming to be good Congressmen attending a non-Congress dinner. Commenting on this totalitarian attempt at regimentation, the Allahabad nationalist paper wrote : " The Congress is open to all. But one must not walk for more than a few yards in any direction; one must wear the clothes, eat the food, and express the views which are prescribed by the High Command. Such is the democracy for which the Congress is fighting." [*Leader*, 23-9-1940.] Perhaps it is a natural result in a country where every association of human beings tends to turn into a caste or a ' birādari.'

This gradual crystallisation of the Congress also into a caste and of its High Command into a body of Caste Elders—a ' Caste Punchayat '—has, specially during its recent annual sessions, become too prominent and obnoxious to remain unnoticed. For instance, aggressive caste communalism during the Congress session held at Haripura early in 1938 created great unpleasantness and indignation in the Congress Muslim camp. Maulana Abdul Hai, President, District Muslim Mass Contact Committee, Gaya,—*i.e.*, a responsible Muslim Congress leader specially commissioned to boost the movement started by the High Command to wean the Muslims from the Muslim League and win them over to the Congress cause—wrote in Comrade M. N. Roy's paper : " Rumour is afloat, supported by some newspapers, that *meat, fishes and eggs were not allowed to be cooked or sold* in Vithal Nagar [temporary ' Congress Town '] or its vicinity in Haripura, *during the Congress session this*

year and only vegetarian diets were allowed...... If it [Congress] is a national organisation, it must respect the feelings of all communities......If you do not allow meat, fishes or eggs, and force people to take vegetarian diets, is it fair, liberal and democratic ? If Muslims or Christians cannot give up meat, fishes or eggs, do you not indirectly force them to leave the Congress severely alone ?.... If the slogan 'Bande Mataram' is repugnant to Muslims, or 'Allahu Akbar' to Hindus, you should not allow any one of them in your organisations if you really mean business. If this ideology is not dropped and the present outlook changed, then even if the Congress Muslim Mass Contact Committee mobilises the wisdom of the world, and brings the mountain in labour, the result would be no bigger than a mouse. I have no hesitation to declare this as the President of the Gaya District Muslim Mass Contact Committee." As a matter of sober fact, even the tiny mouse anticipated by the indignant Maulana failed to incarnate because the 'mountain' firmly refused to be 'brought in labour' as picturesquely put by President Abdul Hai; the Muslim Mass Contact movement was simply still-born. In an editorial note on this letter the paper commented: "Our observation that *all Congress functions bear the stamp of a Hindu religious ceremony* was resented from many quarters. We were challenged to cite specific cases......The above communication from a Muslim Congressman cites concrete instances repulsive even to Muslims like himself." [*Independent India*, 20-3-1938. Italics mine]. It is quite well known that every Congress ceremonial function, such as flag hoisting, etc., has a Hindu and idolatrous tinge about it, and the ceremonial public adoration of the Mahatma is rank Avatar worship.

Compared with the refractory *Independent India*, the *Madīnā* of Bijnour (U.P.) was a staunch Congress paper which had suffered for its politics. In a long leading article it referred to Muslim fears that after gaining real power the Congress would assail and Hinduise the religion, culture and language of the Musalmans, and wailed: "Consider the little town that was erected [at Haripura] in Gujarat, quite recently under the supervision of Sardar Patel. This [Congress] mentality manifested itself in its true colours in this little town. Although the Congress has gained only a little nominal power in a few Provinces, rank Hinduism was oozing out of the arrangements made by the Reception Committee of this session.... And when it is borne in mind that this policy was adopted when the

Muslim Mass Contact movement was on, the [Muslim] suspicions and distrust about the majority are further strengthened, and the thought arises straight: If this is the state of the Congress when it has gained a little power, what will its deeds be like when it wins more power?......The Congress claims that it is not a communal body but represents all communities......And yet, it is a matter for so much regret that in the Haripura Congress, all the letter-press on signboards, notes, slips, etc., was in the Hindi language. *Food arrangements of the Hindu style alone were made. The importing of uncooked meat was forbidden*......On doors and walls Hindu mythological pictures reminiscent of ancient times were displayed. This is not all. In the open session of the Congress there were discussions on the subject of 'Cow-protection' (lit. 'cow-service'), and a 'Go-shālā' (cow asylum) was also organised. There were, again, meetings for the propagation of Hindi, and Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and Subhas Babu took active and zealous part in them. It is quite clear what in such circumstances must be the nature of the apprehensions of the Muslims. Such happenings have instilled this one idea in their minds that under the rule of the British all things dear to them have at least been safe, but there are no signs or chances of these things remaining safe under Swaraj......[But] *the devotees of Swaraj want to create an organised communalism on the lines of ancient Hindu culture;* they regard Urdu as an obstacle in their way; they look upon 'quarbāni' (sacrifice) of cows as an evil thing, they regard Hindu-Muslim unity as improper. Hence the question naturally arises in the minds of Muslims whether this Swaraj is a good thing or a bad thing as compared with British rule." [*Madīnā*, 5-3-1938, quoted in translation in *Dīn*, 14-3-1938. Italics mine].

Early in 1942, Mr. Gandhi wrote in an introspective vein: "Congress......up to now......has been largely a debating society......all the time only playing with its vital programme of construction." [Quoted in *Pioneer*, 10-1-1942]. It is really surprising that it has taken the Mahatma twenty years and more to find out that the Congress, under his own guidance and inspiration, has been 'playing' (in more senses of the word than one) with the two main planks of his 'constructive' programme, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability. As a matter of fact, this 'constructive' programme has proved disastrous to Indian politics, —it has proved more 'destructive' than 'constructive': for it has alienated the Untouchables and driven the Muslims in sheer despair

to adopt openly the 'Two Nations' theory originally mooted by the Hindu Mahasabha leaders, Bhai Parmanand and Mr. V. D. Savarkar. We have seen already how the Untouchables have been 'played' with; but it would take us far afield if I were to deal at adequate length with the Congress handling or mishandling of the distressing Hindu-Muslim problem; if I were to dilate on the painfully fascinating subject of the 'National Language' alone, I have sufficient material for a fair sized monograph on it. For the present I must content myself with barely sketching in the 'caste-Hinduisation' of the Congress to show that its growing bigotry cannot and will not allow it to handle the extremely difficult Problem immediately before us—that of untouchability—firmly and honestly, to speak nothing of solving it. This complaint—that the Congress has become a Hindu body and developed a caste mentality under the Mahatmic regime, while upto his advent it was at least trying to be a purely secular political body representative of all creeds and communities, in spite of the fact that a vast majority of its members and sympathisers were always Hindus—has been often made by many nationalist and Congress Muslims, and even by many Hindu nationalist politicians, publicists and newspapers.

Just about a year before the Haripura session of the Congress a 'Nationalist Muslim' wrote in Comrade Roy's paper: "It cannot be denied that today the Congress atmosphere is dominated to a very large extent by the Hindu spirit......Not that it is done intentionally." [Personally I am not sure that it is not.] "But the very fact that the large majority of Congress members and Congress leaders are Hindus, and more particularly our ingrained habit of introducing religious ideas into every sphere, lends *a predominantly Hindu colour to all the Congress activities and to the entire Congress atmosphere.*" [*Independent India*, 25-4-37. Italics mine.] Even the Madrasi Brahman social reform paper of Bombay, almost a blind admirer of the Mahatma upto quite recently, was disgusted with a speech of the Brahman Congress Premier of Madras in which Mr. Gandhi was made out to be a veritable Avatar, and it said about the Congress session at Tripuri held early in 1939: "The Tripuri Congress has made it clear that we have to deal with the Gandhian ideology as a religious cult and not as a political system." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 18-3-1939].

But the Tripuri (Central Provinces) Congress did something more ; it further spiritualised Indian politics by importing our national magic and witchcraft into them. Mr. Subhas Bose, who was elected president, had become subject to a mysterious ailment weeks before the session, an ailment which baffled his doctors and which lasted till the Congress session at Tripuri was over. Mr. Bose himself has described this illness in a strange article headed " Strange Illness ' in the *Modern Review* of Calcutta. His political enemies, all devotees of the Mahatma, had sneeringly averred that the illness was a ' fake.' " Even in the highest [Congress] circles," writes Mr. Bose, " my illness was not believed in." The sceptical Reception Committee actually assembled a Medical Board to make sure whether the ' Rāshtrapati ' (' Lord of the Nation,' as is the Congress fashion of calling the Congress President) was malingering ! He had to appear before the board " consisting ", says Mr. Bose, " of the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals (C. P. and Berar), the Director of Public Health (C. P. and Berar), and the Civil Surgeon, Jubbulpore." Though baffled by the nature of the illness, the board certified that Mr. Bose was really ill,—so ill that he must not attend the open session ! Although this strange illness defied all diagnosis and threatened to deprive Mr. Bose of his presidential status and powers, our ancient spiritual science of Tantric magic came to his aid and helped him to triumph over and confound the infernal tricks of his political opponents. Some time before Mr. Bose left for Tripuri, " a Professor of Calcutta University " had in grave conclave sat with " a number of pandits and astrologers," and discussed and diagnosed the President-Elect's grave illness. " They......were of the view," proceeds Babu Subhas Bose, " that somebody in some part of the country had been practising what is known in Tantra-Śāstra as ' Māraṇa Yajna ' " [*i.e.*, magical practices intended to kill]. And as the surest protection against these infernal and murderous influences magically directed against him by his political enemies, quite a number of charms and amulets were pressed upon Mr. Bose by his board of magical advisers. While making a faint show of rationalism and scepticism, Subhas Babu writes : " I accepted two rings and four amulets......but as soon as the Tripuri Congress was over I relieved myself of the two rings and four amulets." [*Modern Review*, Aprl 1939, pp. 462-467]. To such a high pitch of spiritualisation has our great ' National ' institution risen under Mahatmic guidance that, discarding mundane

missiles like rotten eggs employed in the material West, our front rank Congress politicians have come to employ the magical and more murderous missiles, prescribed by our ancient and national Tantra-Śāstra, against another front rank Congressman, the only one who has shown the temerity to stand up to the Mahatma in the last twenty-five years. And the spiritual armour that saved him consisted of 'two magical rings and four amulets.' I think the Congress constitution ought to make permanent provision for an armoury of magical and magic-proof rings, amulets and breast-plates ; also for a standing advisory committee of master magicians. Commenting on these highly spiritual happenings at the Tripuri Congress the *Leader* remarked : "For ourselves, we can only say that slave mentality in the religious and social spheres has long been the curse of this unfortunate country, and those who, instead of trying to eradicate it, are seeking to enthrone it in the political sphere as well are rendering no service to this land." [*Leader*, 8-4-1939].

This magical and 'religious cult' aspect of the Congress assumed amazing though serio-comic proportions at its next session held at Ramgarh, after a sharp tussle between Messrs. Gandhi and Subhas Bose in which the latter was worsted. The discomfited Boseites held their own rival conference also at Ramgarh, and as soon as it was over, rain came down in torrents and created great confusion in the Congress session which was going on. This miracle was attribured by Mr. Bose and his followers to the special intervention of the Rain God, as a result of their earnest entreaties and incantations. A leading Congress paper of Calcutta wrote : "'Who destroys him whom God protects ? Soon after our conference was over, the wrath of the Rain God descended on them' [*i.e.*, the antagonists who were holding the Congress session]—these gems are culled from a speech delivered by Sjt. Subhas Bose at Shraddhanand Park [Calcutta] and reported in the *A. B. Patrika* of April 1. Last week we mentioned about a devotee of Subhas Babu remarking : 'A *māran yajna* [destructive sacrifice] brought the rain and spoiled the Congress. Lo, and behold the Master's powers !' Now Subhas Baboo, the Socialist, is himself satisfied that his faith in *māran*......has not been in vain." [*Forward*, 6-4-1940]. But the magic of 'Master' Subhas Bose had not everything its own way ; it was successfully, or almost successfully, countered by the devotees of Grand Master Mohandas Gandhi. Describing this

exciting magical contest (which inevitably reminds one of the terrific magical fight in the Arabian Nights that ended in one of the Three One-Eyed Princes losing one of his eyes), the *Behar Herald* wrote : "Volunteers came out with burning torches and chanting hymns addressed to the Rain God in a pathetic appeal to stop his depredations......Was it not the very Vedic Age brought back to the forties of the twentieth century ?......And yet the indignation of the Congress leaders knows no bounds when any one shows the effrontery to say that the Congress is a Hindu organisation." [*Behar Herald*, 26-3-1940].

This amazing 'magical' tussle with its tragi-comic 'Vedic' voodoo and 'Tantric' tomfoolery was not the only indication of the unmistakable 'nationalism' of the Ramgarh Congress session. The special representative of a Calcutta Muslim paper reproted the remarkable fact that "the painting on the front of the rostrum was that of a cow." [*Star of India*, 30-3-1940.] Still more remarkable was the suggestion seriously made by a leading Congress paper, surveying in retrospect the session that was over, that it was high time a 'common national diet' was adopted by the 'nation.' We are informed by the *Behar Herald* : "According to a Congress daily 'it has been felt by all of us who visited the Congress session that the problem of evolving a common national diet is important and practical.' Now that we are a full-fledged nation we must have a 'national diet' as all other nations have. We have a 'national song' the singing of which in public meetings leads to heads being broken. There is our 'national language' which can be taught in the schools without serious interference only if a thousand people are put behind prison bars......This reminds us of the last item in nationhood—religion—which can be nationalised in the same practical way." [*Behar Herald*, 2-4-1940].

The Patna paper was being sarcastical in all this, but evidently it had lost sight of the fact that a practical beginning in the matter of 'nationalising' food had already been made at the Haripura Congress under Mr. V. Patel's supervision. And as for 'nationalising' religion, the *Behar Herald* seems to have forgotten the 'Shuddhi' (*i.e.*, Hinduisation) movement of the twenties sponsored by Swami Shraddhanand and preached so earnestly twenty years ago by Lala Har Dayal in his 'Political Testament': "I declare that the future of the Hindu race, of Hindustan and of the Punjab rests on these four pillars : (1) Hindu Sanghattan, (2)

Hindu Raj, (3) Shuddhi of Muslims, and (4) the Conquest and Shuddhi of Afghanistan and the frontiers." [Quoted by F. K. Khan Durrani in 'The Meaning of Pakistan,' pp. 99-100, from B. R. Ambedkar's 'Thoughts on Pakistan.'] But in spite of this withering irony of the Patna *enfant terrible*, and in spite of the apparent absurdity and almost criminal idiocy of the Lala's fanaticism, it is a profoundly significant fact that no less a spiritual dignitary of the Congress than Mr. Kishorlal Mashruwala, who is looked upon as the keeper of the Mahatmic conscience and philosophical systematiser of the Mahatmic gospel, has seriously mooted the same proposal about a common 'national' diet and also common 'national' laws of marriage, inheritance, etc.—and all this, again, as a means of bringing about communal unity. In 1940 the *Bombay Chronicle* sent round a questionnaire to a number of prominent Indian politicians and publicists, of which the first and most important question was : "What is your constructive suggestion for the immediate solution of the communal problem ?" Replying to this question, Mr. Mashruwala wrote : "A radical change in the social fabric of the whole nation is necessary. Reforms are needed with *the aim of creating a homogeneous Indian society out of the several religious communities* and social castes......This means that *there should be common laws of marriage, inheritance, etc., common customs regarding what is pure and impure food, etc.*, and social equality of all communities and castes." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 19-4-1940. Italics mine.]

It is necessary to consider carefully this "constructive suggestion for the solution of the communal problem," and examine all its implications. It is a matter of public knowledge that Mr. Mashruwala is a Bania and a Vaishnav of the Swaminarayan sect. As such, and as a devout believer in and apostle of the Mahatmic gospel of 'ahimsa,' he must be a very strict vegetarian ; we have seen how Mr. Gandhi wants even the Untouchables to abjure animal food, and we shall see later on how far his doctrine of 'ahimsa' goes. So under the 'common custom regarding pure and impure food' which is going to solve the communal problem, all non-Hindus needs must give up beef and mutton, fishes and eggs,—exactly what the Congress aimed at enforcing at the Haripura session. Of course, Mr. Mashruwala is wonderfully considerate and generous in that he does not want to enforce this happy reform immediately. For he writes : "It is obvious that this will require a fairly long process.... It cannot be done by ordinances of a powerful autocrat, so far as

India is concerned. But if the aim is accepted, it would be possible to conclude temporary agreements from time to time in a generous manner." [*Ibid.*] Thus the Congress Hindus will conclude temporary agreements with Muslims etc. in a generous manner, so that, say, by the end of the 20th century these barbarians may give up 'impure food'; and as the first sign of grace the Muslims, etc., will, by the very first generous agreement, have evidently to give up beef. For, as Mr. Mashruwala's Master has repeatedly said, Swaraj will be no Swaraj for him if a single cow is killed throughout the length and breadth of India. Mr. Mashruvala's felicitous 'eureka' makes one wonder if after all Dr. Ambedkar was not right when he bluntly said in his book on Pakistan: "It is no use saying that Congress is not a Hindu body. A body which is Hindu in composition is bound to reflect the Hindu mind and to support Hindu aspirations. The only difference between the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha is that the latter is crude in its utterances and brutal in its actions. The Congress is politic and polite." [Quoted in F. K. Khan Durrani's 'The Meaning of Pakistan,' p. 118, f.n.] For, when one looks beneath the 'politic and polite' words of Mr. Mashruwala, the difference between him and Lala Har Dayal appears to be one of degree only; the ultimate absorption of the Muslims adumbrated with some finesse by the former is after all the 'Shuddhi' of Muslims urged with brutal frankness by the latter. And this insane communalism and pitifully infantile bigotry—considerably encouraged and confirmed by the enjoyment for twenty-seven months of a little power that little minded politicians could not digest—is the net result of the spiritualisation of Indian, and particularly Congress, politics during the last twenty-five year.

XIV

THE CONGRESS NATIONAL LANGUAGE.

Addressing a students' gathering at Calcutta, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said only the other day : " What is the foundation on which we can create a National Government ? How out of this disunity and distrust and refusal to meet one another, even in the social sphere, are you going to create a National Government for India ? ......Shall not every one of us respect the rights of every community ? Shall we not stand for the rights of every single minority ? Every single minority has a voice." [*Times of India,* 15-1-1945]. Has it, indeed ? Why, Mrs. Naidu's own Master and Mr. Mashruwala, Bhai Parmanand and Mr. V. D. Savarkar,—all the leaders and systematisers of the Congress-*cum*-Hindu Sabha ideology,—have shewn by their actions that they expect, and have even said in so many words, that every minority, even the largest, must be converted to Hinduism and must merge itself into the Hindu majority. And the Congress has come to believe that it is strong enough to enforce this consummation. As a legal luminary, who is also a half-time and rather distrusted and despised patriot, put it patriotically once in his little minded semi-senile insolence aggravated by the little power the Congress enjoyed for a little while : " You shall all put on *dhotis* if and when we order you to do so." And as for " refusal to meet one another, even in the social sphere," did Mrs. Naidu, or any prominent Congressman, protest when the Congress President called upon Master Tarasingh and Sardar Sampuran Singh to make penance for the sin of attending the Patiala dinner ?

And has she ever protested against the growing cow-worship of the Congress, a 'national' creed which the Congress intends to spread all over India ? Or against its scarcely disguised policy of forcing on the whole country the purely Hindu and highly Sanskritised Hindi language as a 'national language' under the guise of 'Hindi-Hindustani' ? At the All India Urdu Conference held at Bareilly on 14/15-7-1940, Dr. S. N. A. Jafari said : " Babu Sampurnanand and Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, as ministers, gave too much support and emphasis to Hindi." [*Leader,* 22-7-1940]. This fatal infatuation for manufacturing a 'national' language, especially fatal when no 'nation' really exists, has done more to

embitter Hindu-Muslim relations in the last ten or fifteen years than anything else. As I have aready said, a full discussion of this topic would fill a fair sized book ; here I must content myself with very briefly registering the spoken or written words of prominent Congress Hindu leaders which leave no room for doubting or discounting the Muslim fears that the 'national' language warmly advocated by these Hindu patriots simply means the Sanskritised Hindu language 'Hindi', and that this artificial language of recent growth is intended to oust their own beautiful language Urdu—commonly known as 'Hindustani'—which has in reality been the common language of Hindus and Muslims, at least in North India, for some centuries now. Prominent Hindus like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who know and proclaim this truth can now be counted on the fingers of two—perhaps not even two—hands,— thanks to the ceaseless endeavours of the Nāgari Prachāriṇi Sabhā during the last fifty years, ably seconded by the Congress under the Mahatmic dispensation. In fact, ever since British rule became firmly established all over the country, Hindu leaders of thought in most provinces have decided to purge their own particular vernaculars—along with Urdu which was and even now is the true vernacular of the North India bourgeois Hindus—of their "Mlechchha' (un-Hindu) Perso-Arabic element, and to substitute the 'Aryan' Sanskrit element in its place. This linguistic struggle has gone on for more than a hundred years, and since the advent of the Arya Samaj and the inauguration of the Nāgari Prachāriṇi Sabhā, Hindi has been steadily gaining ground in the North Indian Hindu world, so that thousands of Kashmiri Pandit and Kayastha and other bourgeois Hindu families there are of a set purpose giving up Urdu, at least for literary purposes, and taking to highly Sanskiritsed Hindi. It is a remarkable fact that those who speak among themselves, and at home, good or indifferent Urdu, write and read only Hindi, and thus justify what Mr. Gandhi has justly said about Hindi that it is "a language that is written but not spoken."

Ostensibly the Congress has tried to steer an impossible middle course by making a crude unnatural mixture of the two languages and evolving a most barbarous jargon at first commonly known as 'Congress Hindustani,' and commonly reviled by advocates of both Hindi and Urdu as 'Khichṛi boli,' *i.e.*, 'hotch-potch patois.' Mr. Gandhi, however, almost gave the show away by giving this artifi-

cial jargon a new and preposterous name,—' Hindi yāne Hindustani,' or ' Hindi athavā Hindustāni,' or ' Hindi-Hindustani ' for short,—at the Bhāratiya Sāhitya Parishad ' (a purely Sanskrit name for the ' Indian Literary Conference ') held at Nagpur in 1936. A very long and pathetic statement, by Maulvi Abdul Haq,—the great modern champion of simplified Urdu or ' Hindustani ' as the ' national ' language,—which appeared in the Congress Urdu paper *Ajmal* (dated 25-5-1936) and also in the *Hilāl* (dated 29 and 30-5-1936) relates the sad story of the poor Maulvi's disillusionment about Mr. Gandhi's real intentions in starting the hare of the ' national language.' The statement is a revealing document throwing a flood of light on the inner mental workings of not only Mr. Gandhi but also Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and ' two past Congress Presidents ' who were present when the Maulvi protested against the new double-barrelled name and asked point blank : " Why don't you follow the decision of the Congress that the language of the nation will be ' Hindustani ' ? " The Maulvi proceeds : " I purposely said this a second time as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who was not present in the morning, was present now, and I hoped that as President of the Congress he would surely support me. But to my regret and disappointment, Pandit Nehru did not utter a word and sat silent ; and not one of the three Presidents of the Congress present...... broke the stony silence (' ṭas se mas na hue.')" Further,—" When Gandhiji was asked what he meant by ' Hindi-Hindustani,' he said, ' that Hindi which is going to be Hindustani in future.' " The Maulvi concludes quite logically : " The reader must have seen how the ground has been gradually shifted, how ' Hindustani ' was first made ' Hindi,' how it was made to mean ' Hindi,' how the new term ' Hindi-Hindustani ' was invented, and how finally the words ' Hindi yāne (or athavā) Hindustani ' were adopted." Maulvi Abdul Haq repeated all these facts in a speech delivered at the Aligarh Muslim University on 29-1-1940. [*Star of India*, 2-2-1940]. It was at this painful colloquy that " Dr. Syed Mahmood of Patna made Mr. Nehru declare that his mother tongue like that of millions of Hindus and Muslims in North India was Urdu." [*Morning News*, 15-1-1944].

The Maulvi complained further in his statement : " Now the term ' Hindustani ' has also been dropped and ' Hindi ' alone remains." This is perfectly true ; for all over Gujarat and Maha-

rashtra, as also in the Madras Province, all institutions propagating the 'Rāshtrabhāshā,' the 'national language,' are also known as 'Hindi prachār' (propagation) centres, and the examinations conducted by them are frankly in Sanskritised Hindi and bear purely Sanskrit names, and prominent Congressmen associate and identify themselves with their activities. For instance, the Congress-supported 'Hindi Prachār' in Madras, and the 'Rāshtrabhāshā Prachār Maṇḍal' of Wardha (the purely Sanskrit name of this body is again worth noting), have been propagating Sanskritised Hindi as the 'national' language.' In December 1939, Mr. B. G. Kher inaugurated and the late Mr. Mahadev Desai presided at the tenth 'Dakshiṇa Bhārat Hindi Prachārak Sammelan' (mark the word 'Hindi' and the wholly Sanskrit name again) at Madras. The report of the function appearing in the leading Congress daily of Bombay ran: "Presiding over the tenth Dakshina Bharat *Hindi* Pracharak Sammelan, Sri. Mahadev Desai said: 'Today *Hindi prachar in South India......was one of the signal achievements of Mahatma Gandhi*......They had 800,000 learners of *Hindustani*...... In 200 High Schools *Hindi* was being taught today......Forty thousand young people were learning *Hindustani*......today in Government and aided primary schools.'" [*Bombay Chronicle*, 26-12-1939. Italics mine]. It need scarcely be pointed out how 'Hindi' and 'Hindustani' are mixed up here and both used indiscriminately as names of the 'national' language. The report of examinations held by the D. B. *Hindi* Prachār Sabhā which follows speaks of '*Hindustani* prachār' and '*Hindustani* examinations'; and in the very next sentence it refers with satisfaction to the increasing popularity of the '*Hindi* examinations'! Surely, there must be some method in this apparent madness!

At the same function Mr. Kher delivered the 'Convocation' address which is an interesting tissue of irrelevant special pleading, and in which the learned speaker mixed up 'Hindi' and 'Hindustani' and 'Hindi-Hindustani' so as to show that all three meant the same 'national' language, and concluded rather inconsequentially: "It is clear from the above that neither is Hindi the language of the Hindus, nor Urdu the language of the Musalmans ......Just as the language of England is English, of Italy Italian, ...of Bengal Bengali......in the same way the language of Hindustan may be settled as 'Hindustani'......Hindustani

language can be written both in Nagari and Persian script." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 25-12-1939]. Not only does this raggedly learned 'convocation' address sound inconsequential and even rather silly, it sounds perilously like—and is only one step from—Mr. Savarkar's and Dr. Munje's definition of 'Hindustan,'—"As Afghanistan is the country of Afghans, Turkestan of Turks, so Hindustan is the country of Hindus." But to turn to my late friend Mahadev Desai's more sensible but no less confusing address, as President of the Sammelan; when it appeared in full in the *Harijan-bandhu*, I counted more than 200 pure Sanskrit words and expressions which were the most important in the speech; and I found about 50 Perso-Arabic words also which are of common occurrence in everyday Urdu speech. To speak nothing of the gross incongruity of this crude mixture of vocabularies, the point to be noted is that the words of real importance in the speech, 'thought' and 'culture' words, were all Sanskrit. [*Harijan-bandhu*, 31-12-1939 and 7-1-1940].

One passage in the speech seems to be quite significant. Referring to the Madras Congress Premier, Mr. Desai said: "Your extremely shrewd and able Prime Minister Mr. C. Rajagopalachari has taken the grand step ['buland qadam'—which I don't think is good idiomatically] of giving a permanent shape to the propagation of Hindi......His father was a great Sanskrit scholar. But when Mr. Rajagopalachari thought of taking up Sanskrit as a voluntary subject, his father told him to leave Sanskrit alone as it would be of no use in after life. Today Rajaji says that he is paying the penalty now for not learning Sanskrit. If he had acquired Sanskrit and Hindustani in his childhood, he would have been in a different position today." [*Harijan-bandhu*, 31-12-1939]. Evidently this curious passage refers in a round about manner to the fact known—and mocked at—all over India that the Congress Premier who sent thousands to jail for protesting against Hindi being taught in Madras schools cannot speak Hindi at all. But the areal significance of this passage lies in the fact that it reveals the Brahmanical Sanskritising object at the bottom of 'Hindi prachār' in the Madras Province, as the indigenous Tamilians, the vast Non-Brahman majority in the Province, complained and protested when they resisted this insidious propaganda.

We have found Mr. Desai deliberately confounding 'Hindi' and 'Hindustani' while at the same time making 'face-saving' use of a few Perso-Arabic words commonly used in everyday parlance, like 'agar,' 'magar,' 'yāne,' 'kāfi,' 'peshā,' etc., etc. We have also seen Mr. Kher indulging in masterly inconsequence in his eloquent but rambling and even bungling discourse. But other Congress leaders of far higher standing than Mr.Kher have never made such a sorry mess of the matter; they have frankly and firmly, even defiantly, proclaimed Sanskritised Hindi alone to be the 'national' language of India. They are not prepared, even at the instance or behest of Mr. Gandhi, to compromise with Urdu by admitting in their Sanskritised Hindi the few 'face-saving' Perso-Arabic words affected by Mr. Desai and sometimes by Mr. Gandhi himself. It is not easy to track down the Mahatma's tortuous intellectual processes on such ambiguous subjects; and as an ancient British jurist has acutely said, not even the Devil can rightly know what is in the mind of man. However, we have seen how Mr. Gandhi defined 'Hindi-Hindustani' to Maulvi Abdul Haq as "Hindi that will become Hindustani in future" [*Star of India*], or as "that Hindi which in future is going to be Hindustani" [*Ajmal*].

But Babu Rajendra Prasad, who stands very high in the Congress hierarchy, flatly and quite rightly declared at the 'Hindi Sāhitya Sammelan' held at Nagpur in 1936, that Hindi and Urdu are two quite distinct languages; and he went on to assert in no uncertain words that *Hindi* would be the 'Rāshtrabhāshā' of autonomous India. The *Bombay Chronicle* raised an alarm in a long editorial against Rajendra Babu's lapse in using the word 'Hindi' throughout his speech instead of the fictitious and factitious Congress 'Hindustani' of Mr. Gandhi's invention. [*Bombay Chronicle*, 27-4-1936]. Mr. Gandhi replied to this protest, which was also raised by a Muslim correspondent of his; in his delightful round about manner he lavished rather irrelevant (and doubtful) praises on Urdu as "one of the many languages" containing "treasures which should be the common property of all India," and then went on to put up a palpably artificial and unconvincing defence of Rajendra Babu—and also of Babu Purshottamdas Tandon who had earlier said the same things at Allahabad—for declaring that 'Hindi' which was "the language of twenty-two crores" was going to be the 'national' language of India. Mr. Gandhi's characteristic

comment on the Muslim correspondent's protest deserves to be rescued from undeserved oblivion : " Both Tandonji and Rajendra Babu therefore *meant the same thing absolutely as my [Muslim] friend when they used the word ' Hindi.'* The use of the word ' Hindustani ' would not make their position clearer." [From *Harijan* as quoted in *Bombay Chronicle*, 13-5-1936. Italics mine]. Certainly it " would not make their position clearer "; for, as certainly, it would have made their position *shadier* if they had used the word ' Hindustani ' when they definitely meant Sanskritised ' Hindi.' To make matters worse, Mr. Gandhi wrote only a few weeks later : " But as I have endeavoured to show, Hindi, Hindustani, and Urdu are synonymous terms." [*Harijan*, 1-8-1936.] As I have said, I cannot pretend to know what is Mr. Gandhi's own real opinion on the subject. But only a year after his reply to the ' Muslim friend,' Mr, Gandhi himself said about the script to be adopted for the ' national' language, ' Hindi-Hindustani ' : " After a good deal of controversy there is a consensus of opinion that *the common script can be Devanāgari and none else.*" [*Harijan*, 3-4-1937. Italics mine.] In 1935 he had also said in his presidential address at the Indore session of the Hindi Sāhitya Sammelan : हिंदुस्थानको अगर सचमूच एक राष्ट्र बनाना है, राष्ट्रभाषा तो हिंदी ही बन सकती है । (*i.e.*, " If India is to be really made one nation......then *Hindi alone can be the national language.*" [Quoted in *Mahratta*, 29-11-1940.] I repeat I cannot pretend to know more than the Devil.

These ' lapses ' of Tandonji and Babuji were no new heresies. Presiding at the Hindi Speakers' Conference held at Bombay on 29-10-1934, Tandonji had declared that " there was no language equal to Hindi in the whole world," and (I think rightly) that even Tagore had plagiarised Kabir's Hindi poems in his ' Gitanjali.' And Rajendra Babu, who was specially requested to speak at the Conference, declared, as reported by the *Venkaṭeshwar Samāchār*, that " Hindi had won the status of the national language " of India. Two years later, in his presidential address at the Nagpur session of the Hindi Sāhitya Sammelan, Babu Rajendra Prasad described the activities of ' Hindi prachār ' and added ; " The prachār (propagation) of the national language Hindi is being carried on from a national point of view......We believe Hindi to be the national language." [*Venkaṭeshwar Samāchār*, 8 and 15-5-1936.] Inaugurating the 17th session of the Bihar Provincial Sāhity Sammelan, early

in 1941, the Babu said that the Sammelan had taken upon itself "the responsibiity of......raising it [Hindi] to the standard of a national language," and clenched the matter thus: "Hindi is now a living language, spoken and written all over India. Thousands are learning it today. It is a national service." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 6-2-1941]. Again, presiding a few months later at Calcutta over the Pūrva-Bhārat Rāshtrabāshā Prachār Conference, (the Sanskrit appellation is particularly noteworthy), he once more "emphasised that Hindi being the principal language spoken in Northern India and also understood in almost every part of the country, it was agreed that this language alone could be the 'lingua franca' of India"; and he further stressed the point that "a 'lingua franca' for India had to be based on Sanskrit." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 24-6-1941].

Even the Madrasi Congress leader Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya said at the annual 'convocation' of the Dakshiṇa Bhārat Hindi Prachār Sabhā, Madras, in December 1940: "Hindi is as much a hall mark of national emancipation as Khaddar is a symbol of freedom." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 23-12-1940]. And yet when Babu Sampurnanand said that "Hindi is the voice of the nation," etc., Mr. Gandhi hectored him into prevaricating for a time and declaring that he meant 'Hindustani' when he said 'Hindi.' But in his presidential address delivered only a few days later at the Poona session of the Hindi literary conference, the Babu lashed out, throwing discipline and diplomacy to the winds: "Many of you have seen the correspondence between me and Mahatmaji on this question. I still believe that the opinion expressed by me was correct ......Those who openly support Urdu, or indirectly favour the artificial language......known as [Congress] 'Hindustani', pay little heed to logic......I am glad to say that I was supported in this view by eminent leaders like Sri. B. G. Kher, Sri. C. Rajagoparachari, and Sri. Sarat Chandra Bose." [*Mahratta*, 3-1-1941.] And, incidentally, the Babu also let the demure cat out of the Mahatmic bag by blurting out what the Mahatma had written to him: "I agree with what you [Babu S.] say. The Congress has simply named the language; it has prescribed no other limits." [*Ibid.*] What a wonderful 'national' language, with no fixed vocabulary and script, and bearing the not very fixed name of 'Hindustani' *alias* 'Hindi-Hindustani' *alias* 'Hindi-yāne (or athavā) Hindustani'!

But Babu Sampurnanand has stuck to his guns. Speaking three years later at the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Nāgari Prachāriṇi Sabhā, he said about Hindi ; " Its advancement was due to its being the voice of the millions. It was the symbol of their souls." [*Leader*, 31-1-1944.] Finally, Mr. Kalelkar, who is in charge of the Congress department supposed to be manufacturing the 'national' language 'Hindi-Hindustani,' visited Tagore's Santiniketan in 1938, along with other members of the All India *Hindi* Prachār Association ; and addressing the staff and students of Santiniketan he said : " *Hindi* being itself very easy to learn......a serious effort should be made to establish it as the national language of India." He also advocated that the various North Indian (*i.e.*, non-Dravidian) scripts should be so reformed as to make way for Nāgari. [*Free Press Journal*, 13-4-1938]. In a speech at Nasik, Mr. Kalelkar said even more unmistakably : "Hindi alone can be the national language of India....If the 22 crores of Hindus adopt the Nagari script, the seven crores of *Muslims will necessarily be forced to adopt Nāgari* as they needs must have dealings with the Hindus." [*Swarājya*, 22-7-1936]. He repeated the same ideas in a speech delivered at Poona a few days later. [*Kesari*, 28-7-1936]. It is this Sanskritic kinship of all these North Indian vernaculars —Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Hindi, etc.—that tempts Hindu 'nationalists' and Congressmen to look forward to highly Sanskritised Hindi written in the Sanskrit script as the only possible common language for India ; as an important Congress paper, edited by the Mahatma's own son, put it : " because of its close affinity with many Indian languages due to their common origin (*i.e.*, Sanskrit), Hindi has the best claim among Indian languages to become India's national language." [*Hindustan Times Weekly*, 1-2-1943]. And, as Bhai Parmanand puts it axiomatically in his 'Hindu Sangathan' : " The supremacy of Hindi is a sign of the supremacy of the Hindus " [p. 214].

The upshot of this dismal and depressing recital is that when Hindu leaders of the Congress talk of the 'national language,' whatever name they may give it, they mean the highly Sanskritised Hindu language 'Hindi' written in the Nāgari (Sanskrit) script. And this they expect even the Urdu speaking Muslims spread all over India to swallow willy-nilly as the 'national language' of the 'Indian Nation'

XV

CONGRESS AHIMSA AND COW.

With the advent of the Gujarati Mahatma into Congress politics as a front rank leader, Gujarat and we Gujaratis, for the first time in the last seven hundred years, began to loom large in Indian political affairs. And as the sinews needed for the spiritual Congress war against Western materialism and Satanic Imperialism have been supplied mainly by our plain living and high thinking Gujarati —and to some extent Marwadi, *i.e.*, almost Gujarati—plutocrat patriots, the Congress is practically run with Gujarati brains and Gujarati money. Now Gujarat and Gujaratis have for centuries been famous for their unique *ahimsā* (non-violence, literally, ' non-killing '). No country in the world except Gujarat can, for instance, boast of so unique a monument to *ahimsā* as our ' Yūkā Prāsāda ' (' Lice Palace ') built as an act of penance for lice killing. Fortunately, even the rising tide of Western materialism initiated by English education has failed to wash away or weaken our innate *ahimsā*. It is true that many degenerate Gujaratis—some even among staunch Khaddar wearers—do eat fish and flesh and fowl; and some—including staunch Prohibitionist Congress Ministers and their wives—are not quite strangers to wines and liquors. But, at least outwardly, even these blots on our special Gujarati ' Aryan ' culture (which, I think, should rightly be called ' Mahājan ' or ' Bania-Brahman ' culture) are theoretically sound, and therefore, in public at least, zealous advocates of *ahimsā*. And the *ne plus ultra* of *ahimsā* is ' go-rakshā,' cow-saving (or cow-protection). Even Parsis have a soft corner for the cow in their almost omnivorous hearts.

The real soul of Gujarat, and the true non-violent ' Mahājan ' culture of Gujarat, finds its embodiment in our Mahatma, the very incarnation of what has been rather egregiously called ' Gujarat-ni asmitā,' the ' Egoism ' of Gujarat. When he received what he calls " a shower of letters " protesting against his speech at Poona in which he had, according to the protestants, unduly narrowed down the limits of *ahimsā*, Mr. Gandhi wrote in self-defence:
આમ લખનારા ભૂલી જાય છે કે મેં મહાસભાની અહિંસાની

મર્યાદા આંકી છે. હું તો માકણને ન મારું, સાપ વીંછીને ન મારું, માંસ ન ખાઉં: પણ આવી અહિંસા મહાસભાપર ન લાદી શકાય (*i. e.*, " those who write thus forget that I have laid down the limits of the *ahimsa* of the Congress. Personally, of course I would not kill bugs, I would not kill snakes or scorpions, I would not eat flesh. But such *ahimsā* cannot be forced on the Congress.") [*Hārijanbandhu*, 14-9-1940]. Evidently when the generous agreements about pure and impure food outlined by Mr. Kishorlal Mashruwala are concluded with present day flesh eaters, and when as a happy result of these agreements Muslims and others give up flesh eating, then of course the Congress can openly proclaim and enforce the general reprieve for not only cows and sheep and goats, but for all living creatures down to snakes and scorpions, and also to bugs and lice and mosquitoes, plague rats and plague fleas, that are now wantonly and sinfully being slain under the excuse of hygiene and public health. An indignant and scandalised American admirer sent to Mr. Gandhi a few years ago a cutting from the *Times of India* in which the Mahatma was reported to have said, " We have no right to take the lives of mosquitoes, flies, lice, rats and fleas. They have as much right to live as we,"—and the admirer added rather rashly : " I don't believe a damned word of it. I believe this is English propaganda against you and your cause." The embarrassed Mahatma could only say in his laconic reply : " I did make the satetement attributed to me." [*Harijan*, 9-1-1937]. About plague rats also Mr. Gandhi had said in some speeches at Vehra (Borsad) etc., as reported in the *Times of India* and many other papers of the last week of May, 1935, that " a real believer in *ahimsā* like himself would rather lay down his own life than kill a plague rat."

These profoundly moving views on the sacredness of all live and even distressingly and dangerously lively creatures, expressed by Mr. Gandhi several times since 1920, could not but evoke a warm response in the thrilled souls of a people so deeply imbued by nature with the divine virtue of non-violence. To take an instance from the semi-Gujarati land of Rajputana, the leading Gujarati Congress paper of Bombay published this grave report from Ajmere with apparent deep concern : " Grave uneasiness prevails in local Jain circles as a result of the appeal to the public to kill mosquitoes made by Mr. Sriram Sarma, Assistant Sanitary Inspector, at a meeting held by the Public Health Association. Jains protest that this

appeal is opposed to the first principle of Jainism, 'ahimsā paramo dharmah' ('*ahimsā* is the highest religion'), and they declare that no Jain should join the Association." [*Bombay Samachar*, 4-1-1935].

But this protest was a mere tempest in a tea-pot compared with the typhoon raised by rat-killing that raged in the Municipal hall of Ahmedabad,—the home and cradle of the noble Mahatmic ideal of *ahimsā* and the most important centre of Congress politics since 1920. This chapter in the history of the 'Aryan' culture of Gujarat has been immortalised by the leading Congress paper of Ahmedabad as 'Undar mārvānuñ Prakaraṇ,' 'the Affair (or Chapter) of Rat-killing.' Early in April, 1936, when a motion for sanctioning the expenditure on the Rat-killing Department came before the Ahmedabad Municipal Board, Mr. Manibhai Chaturbhai moved an amendment: "This Board resolves to abolish the Rat-killing Department." In the course of his speech Mr. Manibhai said: "As a matter of religious belief I would never support such a department." Referring to the alleged opinion received from Mr. Mahadev Desai on behalf of the ailing Mahatma, purporting to support the killing of rats, Mr. Manibhai objected to its being filed with the papers of the case, and said: "It would have been a different matter if Mahatmaji's own opinion had been requisitioned instead of Mr. Mahadev Desai's." Mr. Valiullāh (Muslim member) appealed to his Jain brothers not to meddle with such matters of public health. Mr. Shakrābhai replied: "In this matter the sentiments of the entire Hindu community are hurt."......Mr. Kikābhai said, "The rat is the Lord Ganesh" [evidently a reporter's slip: the rat is the steed of Lord Ganesh, not the Lord himself]; and he added that "all who believed in 'jīvadayā' ('mercy to live creatures') must oppose such a matter."......Mr. Jāḍāwālā said: "Life and death are in the power of God alone, and therefore it is not right to kill rats." [*Prajābandhu*, 12-4-1936]. The adjourned debate on the question of sanctioning the Rat-killing grant of Rs. 14,000 was resumed in the Ahmedabad Municipal Hall on 22-4-1936. Mr. Manibhai Chaturbhai moved that the papers be filed. In doing so he said: "At the last meeting the alleged opinion of Mahatmaji was cited. I have gone through Mahatmaji's speeches at Borsad, and also the account of the [Congress] Committee there. These show that Mahatmaji is not at all in favour of killing rats......what Mr. Mahadev Desai

may have written during Mahatmaji's illness cannot be regarded as Mahatmaji's own opinion."......Mr. Bhagubhai said: "This affair hurts the feelings of not only Jains but of the entire Hindu community......We have no right to kill creatures we cannot create." Mr. Jāḍāwāla said: "God has knowingly created creatures like snakes and scorpions, and there is no need to kill them."...... Mr. Chunilal declared that the rat was the steed of the God Ganesh and he supported the amendment that the papers be filed. Finally, poll being taken on the amendment and the original motion asking for the expenditure to be incurred on the Rat Department, the motion was defeated and the amendment passed by 24 votes to 5, two membres remaining neutral. [*Prajābandhu*, 26-4-1936].

Thus happily ended in the Municipal Corporation of the second city in the Province this memorable and historic Rat-saving chapter with a resounding victory for the truly Mahatmic 'Aryan' principle of unadulterated *ahimsa*, won by true followers of the Congress. It is not at all surprising that in such an impregnable stronghold of *ahimsa*, indignant protests should be raised against the killing of even man-eating crocodiles infesting the local Kānkaria tank. Some six months after the Rat Affair, Mr. Bhogilal Bhudharbhai, Honorary Secretary, Jivadayā Prachāriṇi Sabha, issued one such indignant protest against the efforts of the Ahmedabad police to shoot these poor creatures simply because they had recently killed one or two 'rash intruding' human fools, and he pleaded for 'lebensraum' for the persecuted crocodiles. The Honorary Secretary's argument was perfectly logical. "If," he wrote, "people enter the waters of the tank disregarding warnings given by others, and are consequently caught by some crocodiles, it is difficult to understand how all the crocodiles are to blame therefor." He therefore urged that all these innocent crocodiles in the tank should be transplanted to distant and out of the way pieces of water; for, if this were done, he added, "the killing of numerous crocodiles would be prevented, and the work of *dayā-dharma* (the religion of mercy) would receive encouragement." [*Gujarati Punch*, 11-10-1936. The name of the paper should not mislead the unwary; it is *not* a comic paper, for 'Punch' here means 'Panchayat' or 'jury.'] To my great regret I seem to have missed the exciting debate in the Ahmedabad Municipal Board on this grave question of life and death for the poor crocodiles just wanting to live at peace with the world if left unmolested in the Kānkaria tank.

When the lives of bugs and lice, plague rats and plague fleas, snakes and scorpions, and even man-eating crocodiles, are thus held sacred by us Gujaratis, no wonder fanatical, even murderously fanatical, feelings are roused in this uniquely spiritual land when such sacred creatures as pigeons and peacocks and monkeys and, especially, cows are killed. There are constant piteous complaints raised in newspapers all over India about the reign of terror created by sacred but dangerously mischievous monkeys. But the utmost our Municipal bodies can do is to appoint special officers called 'Monkey Catchers' who catch and deport as many monkeys as they can, while the deported monkeys generally return unrepentant after a short sojourn in their temporary exile. The measure of our high and unique spirituality in grossly mundane and material terms is thus strikingly estimated by those who profess to know : " One must mention in this connection the unchecked ravages of monkeys and other wild animals, especially rats. It has been reckoned that this taboo on the taking of life costs India, through the maintenance of aged and defective cattle, four times the land revenue ; and through the toleration of rats, more than the military defence of the Peninsula." [Quoted from Brailsford's 'Rebel India,' in *Vasanta* of Ahmedabad, Vol. 31, No. 1 (published in June, 1932)]. I would not have given this quotation from a book written by a Westerner, even though he has always been in the good books of Congressmen ; but I take it from an unimpeachable Gujarati and nationalist source, where it is quoted with evident approval,—and, what is better, Mr. Gandhi himself has quoted this estimate, again with evident approval.

But far more sacred than plague rats and pigeons, monkeys and peacocks, is the cow ; and in this phenomenally spiritual land, the crux of the major political question—the Hindu-Muslim problem —is the cow. Even among the naturally unsentimental and hard-headed Maharashtrians, cow-worship has been cultivated assiduously for the last two generations ; and during the last quarter of a century the name of the high priest of this cult in Maharashtra, Chounḍe Maharaj, has become a household word, not only among Marathi speaking people, but practically all over Hindu India. A few Maharashtrian rationalists have tried to ridicule the cult ; Mr. V. D. Savarkar, soon after his return from the Andamans, carried on a regular crusade against it. But he must have seen his mistake very early ; for, during the last ten years or so I have not

come across any of his stinging satires and tirades aimed against cow-worship. Another Maharashtrian Hindu Mahasabha leader, Mr. S. L. Karandikar, M.A., LL.B., M.L.A., has frankly advised such rationalists to put aside their rationalism and wisely make full use of the Hindu cow worship for the purely political work of Hindu Sangathan. [*Kāl*, 3-3-1940]. And this cynical advice is as true as it is wise. No Hindu leader can afford to be rational on this question ; he cannot give up the cow and retain his leadership. In the first flush of non-co-operation and gushing Hindu-Muslim unity, it was reported that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had said somewhere that ' he would himself sacrifice a cow if this act could establish Hindu-Muslim unity.' Whether the report was true or false, I do not know ; but I remember very well the terrific storm it raised in the Hindu press and the scathing denunciations of this alleged heresy, all the more wicked and sinful because uttered by an orthodox and devout Brahman like the Pandit.

But Mr. Gandhi has never wavered in his profound and passionate cow-worship. In fact, he has practically identified ' go-rakshā '—cow-saving—with Swaraj. And Mr. Gandhi has always claimed to represent the Congress,and through it the whole of India. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, presiding over the Second Round Table Conference, said in the concluding speech, referring to Mr. Gandhi: "....he has always told us that you [Muslims etc.] were sections and he comprehended you all." And Mr. Gandhi replied with becoming modesty: "Of course." [' India's Case for Swaraj,' p. 114, quoted in ' Gandhi-Muslim Conspiracy,' p. 219]. Even if we discount, in the light of unhappy happenings since the glorious days of the Second Round Table Conference, this slightly exaggerated claim, Mr. Gandhi's views on the cow question must be the views of at least the Congress, if not " you all." Even Congress stalwarts have come to realise that the Congress does not represent all Indians. Just about a couple of weeks ago, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu admitted with admirable candour at a press conference held at Madras : " Today Musalmans are not in the Congress ; nor Indian Christians as a community. There are other large bodies of people who are not in the Congress." With still more admirable candour and introspection, rather unusual in Congress leaders, she added : " If we are going to eliminate everybody who differs from us *we would be just one more caste in our caste-ridden country*." And yet, the very next day the volatile poetess changed front, perhaps to

suit her audience, the ' Gujarati Mandal ' of Madras, and repeated the old, old parrot cry : "Gandhiji is India and India is Gandhiji." [*Sunday Observer*, 21-1-1945. Italics mine.] Striking the average between these two statements we may safely deduce that the views of Mr. Gandhi on the cow question are the views of at least the Hindu Congress which, as even Mrs. Naidu admits, is fast becoming a caste organisation. Hence it is necessary to analyse in some detail the Mahatmic teaching on this fateful question.

Writing in 1920, in the beginning of his Mahatmic career, Mr. Gandhi said : ગોરક્ષા મને અતિ પ્રિય છે. હિંદુધર્મનું મોટામાં મોટું બાહ્ય સ્વરૂપ શું એમ જો મને કોઇ પૂછે તો હું ગોરક્ષા સૂચવું (*i.e.*, "Cow-protection is very dear to me. Should any one ask me, ' what is the greatest outer aspect of the Hindu religion,' I would suggest cow-protection.") [' Gosevā,' p. 3.] Expatiating on the Hindu religion, he wrote a year later in less hazy language : આ બધું છતાં હિંદુધર્મની પ્રધાન વસ્તુ નિરાળીજ છે. તે ગૌરક્ષા. ગૌરક્ષા એ મનુષ્યના વિકાસક્રમમાં મને સૌથી અલૌકિક વસ્તુરૂપે ભાસી છે (*i.e.*, " With all that, the chief thing in the Hindu religion is quite another (*i.e.*, other than such elements as caste, etc.) It is cow-protection. To me cow-protection appears to be the most unique thing in the order of man's development.") [*Ibid.*, p. 7]. Warming up, he wrote with poetic and therefore vapoury fervour : ગાય એ દયાધર્મની મૂર્તિમંત કવિતા છે (*i.e.*, " the cow is the poetry incarnate of the religion of mercy.") [*Ibid.*] With mounting lyricism and increasing woolliness Mr. Gandhi proceeded : જે અજ્ઞાત ઋષિએ કે દ્રષ્ટાએ આ ગોપૂજા ચલાવી તેણે ગાયથી શરૂઆત કરેલી. એથી નિરાળું બીજું કશું એનું ધ્યેય હોઇજ ન શકે (*i.e.*, " the unknown Rishi or Seer who started this cow worship made the beginning with the cow. No other than this alone could be his ideal.") [*Ibid.*, p. 8.] I cannot quite understand these highly emotional and mystical sentences ; but when poetry incarnates in a bovine shape, sense must fend for itself and had better not intrude on our heightened emotions. Anyhow, we come to a quite negotiable sentiment when Mr. Gandhi concludes : ગૌરક્ષા એ હિંદુ ધર્મે દુનિયાને આપેલી બક્ષિસ છે (*i.e.*, " Cow-protection is a gift given by the Hindu religion to the world.") [*Ibid.*] Thus we arrive at another grand Law of Nature, the sacrosanctity of the cow, which having been discovered, like the Law of Caste, by our Rishis and Seers in their mystic trances, is like that Law going to save the world from the utter ruin to which it is blindly rushing.

It is reassuring, however, to common erring mortals who know not this Law, to be naively told on the very next page in a fit of revulsion from poetic fervour to cold realism: હું નથી માનતો કે દુનિયાના બીજા કોઇપણ દેશમાં તેનાં ઢોરોની હાલત હિંદુસ્તાનના કરતાં ભૂંડી હોય (*i.e.*, " I do not believe that the plight of cattle in any other country of the world can be more evil than in India.") [*Ibid.*, p. 9.] But however ghastly the plight of our cattle may be, what must the Hindus do to save the Mother Cow? For that is the real test of Hinduism: હિંદુઓની પરીક્ષા ટીલા કર્યાથી, સ્વરશુદ્ધ મંત્રો ભણ્યાથી, કે ન્યાતફિરકાઓના ઝીણામાં ઝીણા નિયમો ચીવટથી પાળ્યાથી યે નહિ, પણ ગાયને બચાવવાની તેમની શક્તિથીજ થવાની છે. અત્યારે તો ગોરક્ષા ધર્મનો દાવો કરનારા આપણે ગાયને અને તેના વંશને ગુલામ બનાવી જાતે ગુલામ બન્યા છીએ (*i.e.*, " The Hindus are going to be tested not by the making of caste marks, not by the chanting of correctly accented Mantras, nor by the strict observance of the minutest rules of castes and sub-castes, —they are going to be tested *only by their power of saving the cow.* We who claim to profess the religion of cow protection have at present become slaves ourselves by making slaves of cows and their progeny.") [*Ibid.*, pp. 9-10. Italics mine.]

This earnest appeal to the Hindus to develop their " power of saving the cow " naturally brings us to the practical and political aspect of the cow question. Says Mr. Gandhi going to the centre of things: ગોરક્ષાની સાથે હિંદુ-મુસલમાન ઐક્યને નિકટનો સંબંધ છે (*i.e.*, " Hindu-Muslim unity has a close connection with cow-protection.") [*Ibid*, p. 11.] Carefully developing this political aspect of the question in a considered pronouncement,—his presidential address at the Belgaum (1924) session of the Cow-Protection Conference,— Mr. Gandhi declared: ગોરક્ષાનો પ્રશ્ન, મારા વિચાર પ્રમાણે સ્વરાજના પ્રશ્નથી નાનો નથી. એને સ્વરાજના પ્રશ્ન કરતાં હું કેટલેક અંશે ઘણો મોટો સમજું છું (*i.e.*, " In my opinion, the question of cow-protection is not smaller than the question of Swaraj; in some respects *I consider it to be far bigger than the question of Swaraj.*") [' Gosevā,' p. 15. Italics mine.] Resorting to his risky habit of interpreting all the sacred books of the world at will according to the dictates of an all-sufficient Inner Voice, Mr. Gandhi said in this address about the Qurān: કુરાને શરીફમાં, મારા સમજવા પ્રમાણે, કોઇ પણ પ્રાણીનો નાહક પ્રાણ લેવો એ પાપ છે એમ લખેલું છે. મુસલમાનોને એવું સમજાવવાની શક્તિ હું કેળવવા ઇચ્છું છું કે, હિંદુસ્તાનમાં હિંદુઓની સાથે રહીને ગોવધ કરવો એ હિંદુનું ખૂન કરવા બરાબર છે; કારણ કે ખુદાએ નિર્દોષ પાડોશીનું ખૂન કરનારને માટે જન્નત નથી એમ ઠરાવ્યું છે, એવું કુરાન કહે છે

(*i.e.*, " So far as I understand, it is written in the holy Qurān that it is a sin to take the life of any living creature unnecessarily. I desire to *develop the strength of making the Musalmans understand* that to live in India with the Hindus and to kill a cow is equivalent to murdering a Hindu ; for, the Qurān says that Allah has ordained that ' Jannat ' (paradise) is not for the murderer of an innocent neighbour.") [*Ibid.*, p. 22, Italics mine.] That is, to put this superb ratiocination in plain language, a Musalman slaughtering a cow within the four corners of India for food or for the Baqar-Id sacrifice will, according to the Qurān, be consigned by Allah to hell. If I am wrong in this interpretation of the above Gandhian exegesis, I shall be glad and am anxious to be corrected, either by Mr. Gandhi himself or Mr. K. Mashruwala, or, failing both, by Professor A. R. Wadia.

Mr. Gandhi has other arguments also, which are of a highly, even ticklishly sentimental nature. One is, " I regard the slaughtering of a cow as my own murder " ; and another is, " who kills and eats a cow, kills and eats my mother." This is the usual highly spiritual gambit of making the opponents who persist in cow-slaughter to appear in the eyes of the Hindu world as heartless and Satanic monsters. But to return to the political aspect of cow-protection. In September, 1933, Mr. Gandhi was interviewed by the representative of a Cow-Protection institution. The authentic report of the interview, taking up six pages, is published as a fitting Introduction to the authoritative compilation ' Gosevā.' The representative asked Mr. Gandhi at the outset: ગોસેવાવિષે આપના પહેલાંના ઉદ્ગારોમાં, આટલા વરસના વિચારો પછી, કંઇ ફેરફાર કરવા જેવું આપને લાગે છે? પહેલાંના ઉદ્ગારો આવા હતા: (૧) આ એક ગોસેવાનું કામ જ સ્વરાજ્યને નજીક લાવનારું છે. (૨) ગોવધ થાય છે ત્યાંસુધી મારો પોતાનોજ વધ થાય છે એમ મને લાગે છે. મારા બધા પ્રયત્નો ગોવધ અટકાવવા માટે છે. ગાયને બચાવવા સારૂ પોતાનો પ્રાણ આપવા જે તૈયાર નથી તે હિંદુ નથી. (૩) મારી ઊંડામાં ઊંડી બે મનકામનાઓ છે: એક અસ્પૃશ્યતાનિવારણ અને બીજી ગોસેવા. આ કામોમાં જ્યારે ફતેહ મળે ત્યારેજ સ્વરાજ્ય પ્રાપ્તિ થાય.......
(*i.e.*, " Do you think you should make any change in your former utterances about ' cow-service ' after further thought for so many years ? Your former utterances were these : (1) *This one work of ' gosevā ' alone is going to bring Swaraj nearer.* (2) So long as cows are killed I feel that I myself am being killed. All my endeavours are for stopping cow-killing. *He who is not prepared to lay down his life to save the cow is not a Hindu.* (3) The deepest desires of my

mind are two: first, removal of untouchability, and second, 'go-sevā.' Swaraj can be attained only when success is achieved in these two matters......") Mr. Gandhi replied: આ વિચારોમાં મારે કશોય ફેરફાર કરવો નથી (*i.e.*, "I do not want to make any change at all in these views.") [Introduction, p. 8. Italics mine]. Of course, Mr. Gandhi added that in interpreting these dicta the context should be taken into consideration. Context or no context, as a dispassionate neutral who is neither a Hindu nor a Muslim, and who has a natural and perhaps inherited aversion to beef in any form, and who is not interested in any way in the potted or fresh beef trade as so many good orthodox Hindus are, I take these 'utterances' to imply that according to Mr. Gandhi's innermost religious conviction, if the Untouchables (who, by the bye, are mostly beef eaters) are won over to the orthodox cow-worshipping Hindu fold, the community as a whole will "develop the strength" ['Goseva,' p. 22, as quoted above] necessary for saving the cow. And when this happens, and as a result Muslims entirely give up cow slaughter, real Swaraj will have arrived.

I have on my record many other pronouncements of the Mahatma on the cow question. Here I shall give only one to show how the Congress is pledged through its sole Dictator to save cows when in power. A Bombay paper reproduced from the *Rāshtra-Lakshmi* of Mathura, the holy land of Krishna and his sacred cows, the following words as being Mr. Gandhi's own pronouncement on the subject: આપણી પ્રજા તો ગોરક્ષા કરે જ; સાથે સાથે રાજસત્તાએ પણ દૃઢતાપૂર્વક ગોરક્ષા કરવી જોઇએ એવો મારો નમ્ર અભિપ્રાય છે (*i.e.*, "Our people must of course practise 'gorakshā' (cow protection); (but) my humble opinion is that side by side *the Government also must firmly practise 'gorakshā.'*") [*Navaprakāsh*, 8-9-1940]. This means that Mr. Gandhi expects the Congress when it comes into power again to take up cow-saving 'firmly.' And this 'humble' opinion must be kept in mind when considering the cow-protecting bodies inaugurated under Mr. Gandhi's inspiration,—the 'Akhila Bhārat Gorakshā Maṇḍal' started in December, 1924, at the Belgaum session of the Cow-Protection Conference presided over by the Mahatma, and the more modestly named 'Gosevā Sangh' which took the place of the moribund Maṇḍal in 1928. The Mahatma himself became the president of the 'Sangh', and among members of the executive were such prominent Congressmen as Mr. Jamnalal Bajaj, Mr. Vinoba Bhave and Mr. D. B. Kalelkar.

['Gosevā,' pp. 172-177.] In view of all these facts, and all these authentic statements made and specifically confirmed by Mr. Gandhi, I think it is quite logical to draw the conclusion that cow-protection has become one of the most important objectives and functions of the Congress ; and this in other words means that the Congress has become what Mrs. Sarojini Naidu calls it,—" one more [Hindu] caste in this caste-ridden country."

XVI

CONGRESS COW-POLITICS.

The history and origin of cow-worship in India has baffled oriental scholars and historians. It is an undoubted fact that from the earliest Vedic times down to the beginning of the Christian era, the Hindus used to kill and eat cows and bulls in vast numbers. That lifelong scholar of the Indian epics, C. V. Vaidya, shows how at the heroic feasts and sacrificial sessions described in the Mahabharata, thousands of animals including cows and bulls were killed and eaten. In the Horse Sacrifice performed by Yudhishṭhira after the great war, the epic " relates that birds, brutes and chiefly oxen as prescribed in the Śāstras were sacrificed," and that " the people saw no end. . . . of the animals that were killed." Vaidya comments frankly on this Gargantuan feasting: " In fact the festivities. . . . were of the most bacchanalian kind and perhaps did not differ much from the feasts of the voracious beef-eating Germans, the brother Aryans of the west, whether in the number of animals that were killed or of the flasks of wine that were drunk: सुरामैरेयसागरा :" (*i.e.*, 'oceans of liquor and wine.') ['Epic India,' pp. 117-118.] Vaidya again writes: " There is of course not the least doubt that at the beginning of the epic period. . . . beef was freely eaten by the Indo-Aryans." It may be noted in passing that the epic is believed to have been written and to have grown to its present vast proportions between about 400 B.C. and 400 A.D. Vaidya further cites the instance of a great sacrificer Rantideva in whose house one thousand cows (or bulls) were killed every day. But as to when such cow-slaughter became a sin, Vaidya confesses that " the history of this prohibition [of cow killing and beef eating] is shrouded in darkness." [*Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.] The idea that cows were sacred developed early, but they continued to be eaten just because they were sacred food. As the greatest living authority on the Dharma-Śāstras, Mahāmahopādhyāya P. V. Kāṇe, says in his Marathi lectures on the subject: " It was not that the cow was not sacred in Vedic times; it was because of this sacredness that it is ordained in the Vājasaneyi Śruti that beef should be eaten as being sacred." ['Dharma-Śāstra Vichār,' p. 180] Mr. Kāṇe goes on to quote confirmatory citations from the Dharma aphorisms of Vasishṭha and

Āpastamba, *e.g.*, "cow and bull are sacred [li. ' fit for sacrifice'] and therefore should be eaten." (Āpastamba, I. 5.14.29). These aphorisms are generally believed to have been written between the fifth and third centuries B.C.

Coming to later times, it is certain that the Indian Hippocrates and Galen, the twin Rishis of Ayurvedic medicine, Charaka and Suśruta, had supreme faith in the dietetic and therapeutic value of beef; just as they had an even more fervent faith in the sovereign value of good wine,--विश्रामो जीवलोकस्य युक्त्या पीतं रसायनम्-- "if wisely drunk, it is the solace of this world of mortals, it is a sovereign elixir," is the lyrical finale of the noblest eulogy on wine ever uttered. This means that in the first century of the Christian era, from which the oldest Ayurvedic texts date, liquor was drunk and beef was commonly eaten and strongly recommended for purely dietetic reasons by the best Indian medical opinion. The change to prohibition seems to have taken place in the next century or two. As Professor D. R. Bhandarkar points out in his Madras University Lectures (1938-39): "It deserves to be noted that in Chapter V of his Smriti which deals with lawful and forbidden food, Manu nowhere forbids the use of beef." [' Some Aspects of Indian Culture,' p. 77.] And the Code of Manu is generally placed somewhere between 100 B.C. and 100 A.D. Professor Bhandarkar further points out that the earliest mention of cow killing as a sin is found in early fifth century epigraphs, and he concludes that cow killing came for the first time to be regarded as a capital sin, on a level with Brahman-murder, some time in the fourth century A.D. [*Ibid.*, p. 78.] This would seem to show that cow worship came in with the Brahmanical revival patronised by the Gupta Emperors, along with the worship of Krishna as the great divine lover of cows and cowherdesses.

This brief sketch of the historical background of the present day cow-worship will enable us to appreciate fully the reactions of a devout cow-worshipper like Mr. Gandhi to these facts and conclusions,—facts and conclusions, be it noted, assessed and drawn by sound scholars who are good Hindus and Brahmans. When faced with Vaidya's very modestly put opinion on the subject and a patently unscholarly refutation of it written from the usual fanatically uncritical Arya Samajist point of view, Mr. Gandhi rejected the former though evidently even he could not quite swallow the latter. As usual he relied on his ' inner voice ' and wrote: "As a

layman not nowing the original, I follow the excellent rule that when there is the slighest doubt it is best to lean on the right side, the right side in this case being the belief that those who gave us the Vedas were not guilty of what appears to our age to be the crime of killing cows for sacrifice or food." [*Young India*, 29-9-1927]. I have long been acquainted with this 'excellent rule,' this soul-satisfying way of getting round unpalatable facts by 'leaning on the right side,' *i.e.*, stoutly believing what we want to believe. There is an interesting though not very intellectual class of good people in the none too intellectual Parsi community who have come to believe that meat eating and wine drinking are sins and spiritual crimes. They are not content with practising and preaching vegetarianism and teetotalism ; they feel unhappy if they cannot believe that these doctrines are taught by their own scriptures and traditions. So they have managed to convince themselves that in spite of scriptural and traditional proofs of an unbroken history of meat eating and wine drinking through twenty-five centuries at least, their Prophet and their scriptures must have forbidden, and did forbid, these sinful practices. And their train of reasoning takes exactly this Mahatmic 'excellent way' : '1. Meat eating and wine drinking are sins and crimes. 2. No religion worth the name can sanction such sins and crimes. 3. Hence Zoroastrianism, acknowledged on all hands to be a highly ethical religion, could not have sanctioned any such sinful pactices. 4. Therefore, Zoroastrianism never sanctioned meat eating and wine drinking'. It has taken me more than twenty-five years of very amusing but futile controversies with such fanatically good but very irrational people to learn rather late in life that mere reasoning and logic based on incontestable texts and historical facts are wasted on those who have made up their minds about such matters, and who cannot see that ideas of right or wrong vary in various ages and among various peoples. And by resorting to just this kind of naively supra-rational logic, Mr. Gandhi is here trying to get round historical facts ascertained and established by well-known scholars of unimpeachable authority who are also good Hindus and Brahmans. Elsewhere he writes with the same disarming naivety and modesty: મારૂં સંસ્કૃત જ્ઞાન નહિ જેવુંજ ગણાય...છતાં મેં શાસ્ત્રોને ધર્મદૃષ્ટિએ જાણ્યાં છે. તેમાંનું રહસ્ય હું જાણી ગયો છું...શાસ્ત્રો વાંચવાની–સમજવાની–ચાવી મને હાથ લાગી છે...જે શાસ્ત્ર મને મદિરાપાન, માંસભક્ષણ, પાખંડ ઇત્યાદિ શીખવે તે શાસ્ત્ર ન કહેવાય (i.e., "My knowledge of Sanskrit can be said to be as good

as nil... Yet I have comprehended the Śāstras from the point of view of 'dharma.' I have comprehended their secret ....I have found the key for reading and understanding the Śāstras....That Śāstra which teaches me to drink wine, to eat flesh, to be a heretic, etc., cannot be called a Śāstra." ['Dharma-Manthana,' pp. 22-23.] And by using this master key, and by following the 'excellent way,' he has arrived at the highly soul satisfying conclusion that as the Vedas are infallible Śāstras and they therefore *could not* have prescribed cow slaughter, why, they of course *did not*,—whatever Vaidya and Kāṇe and Bhandarkar and a host of other Hindu scholars may say to the contrary.

But Mr. Gandhi's convictions on the subject of cow killing are so deeply rooted and passionately held that he is not content with this soul-satisfying fallacy so common among good people who want to read their own convictions into ancient texts. In his presidential address at the Belgaum Cow Conference, Mr. Gandhi referred to these opinions of 'big scholars and pandits' that cow sacrifice is to be found in the Vedas, etc., and to such sentences in his own High School Sanskrit text-books as that 'formerly Brahmans used to eat beef,' and proceeded: એવાં વાક્યો છતાં હું માનતો આવ્યો છું કે વેદમાં એવી વાત લખી હોય તો તેનો અર્થ કદાચ આપણે કરીએ છીએ એ ન થતો હોય. બીજો પણ સંભવ છે. મારા અર્થ પ્રમાણે અથવા મારા આત્માની પ્રતીતિ પ્રમાણે,—અને મને પાંડિત્ય કે શાસ્ત્રીય જ્ઞાન આધારરૂપ નથી, પણ આત્માની પ્રતીતિ જ આધારરૂપ છે,—ઉપર ટાંકેલ વચનો જેવાં વચનોનો બીજો અર્થ ન હોય, તો એવું હોવું જોઇએ કે તેજ બ્રાહ્મણો ગોભક્ષણ કરતા કે જેઓ ગાયને મારીને પાછી ગાયને સરજી શકતા હતા...મેં વેદાદિનો અભ્યાસ નથી કર્યો, ઘણા સંસ્કૃત ગ્રંથો હું અનુવાદથી જ જાણું છું, એટલે મારા જેવો પ્રાકૃત માણસ આવા વિષયમાં વાત શું કરે? પણ મને આત્મવિશ્વાસ છે, ...(*i.e.*, "In spite of such sentences, I have continued to believe that if such a thing be written in the Veda, then perhaps its meaning may not be what we make it out to be. There is another possibility also. According to my intrepretation or according to the conviction of my inner self (ātmā),—*and for me learning or Śāstraic scholarship are not authoritative, but only the conviction of the inner self is authoritative*,—if the statements like those cited above have no other meaning, then it must have been the case that *only those Brahmans used to eat the cow who could again revive the cow after killing her*......I have not studied the Vedas, etc.; I know many Sanskrit books through translations only. So what can an ordinary person

like me say on such subjects? *But I have faith in myself......*") ['Gosevā,' pp. 16-17. Italics mine.]

To argue with such a superbly ineffable 'faith' is to try to smash a granite rock using the bare head as a battering ram. And this saving 'faith' in the Mahatmic 'self' is not restricted to the Mahatma alone; it is religiously held and proudly avowed by his devout followers as faith in a new Prophet with his gospel, in an Avatar, in God Himself. Dr. P. Sitaramayya has said that "enjoyment of a superconscious state," which Mr. Gandhi enjoys, "is the privilege of a Mahatma"; and that "Gandhi is one of those Avatars who descend on earth in order to purify the world." ['Gandhi and Gandhism,' pp. 31-32]. And that is what that politic philosopher, Sir S. Radhakrishnan, also has said. Most Congress papers have said, and say, year in and year out, that Mr. Gandhi is several Prophets and Avatars rolled into one; for instance, the Patna Congress daily said three years ago, "He is today the living Jesus, Mahomed and Buddah" (*sic.*) Babu Purshottamdas Tandon has said in a speech at the Agra Girls' School that "Mahatma Gandhi is a living deity"; and this creedal crescendo has reached its climax in Babu Srikrishna Sinha's proclamation that "Mahatmaji is more than God." [*Behar Herald*, 26-3-1940]. And as none who has not faith in the Mahatma can be a good Congressman, it is no exaggeration to say that cow-protection, if not cow-worship, has become a cardinal doctrine of the Congress creed, at least implicitly, for the vast majority of Congressmen who are Hindus.

It is necessary to give here some remarkable activities of cow-protection bodies in the last few years, especially during the Congress regime, as recorded enthusiastically in Congress and Nationalist papers, and the ultimate contacts of these bodies with leading Congressmen and Congress executives. It must not be forgotten, again, that most active cow-protectors,—Gujaratis, Marwadis, etc.—are staunch Congressmen too. At the sixth All-India Cow Conference, held on 8-4-1939 at holy Mathura, the President, Seth Chiranjilal Loyalka, "worshipped Mother Cow" in this fashion: "A charming white cow with a big 'Aum' painted on her body with red pigment......was worshipped after her forehead had been marked with red pigment and she had been decked with flower garlands......When Vedic mantras were chanted the cow lifted her face and kept looking at her worshippers." [*Bombay Samachar*, 12-4-1939]. The *Leader* published a photograph of this pro-

foundly affecting scene with the letterpress: " Seth Chiranjilal Loyalka......worshipping a cow before the commencement of the Conference." In this picture Sethji stands before the cow with folded hands and ecstatically closed eyes, while an admiring crowd looks on. [*Leader*, 16-4-1939]. At this Conference the President reiterated the Mahatma's own dictum when he said: " I for one believe that *Swaraj lies in cow-protection.*" He also sternly condemned Lord Linlithgow's scheme of importing foreign stud bulls and said: " To pollute the sacred cows of our India by crossing them with foreign bulls, and thus to produce half-caste (' varṇasaṃkara ') calves and heifers, is from the religious point of view a work of utter injustice. The milk of such cows will have ' tāmasic ' (evil) qualities." [*Bombay Samachar*, 14-1-1939]. It is worthy of note that just about this time ' Humanitarian Day ' was celebrated at Bombay, under the auspices of the Bombay Humanitarian League and 21 other bodies including all the important trade guilds of this city. The chief resolution adopted by this great gathering of the wealthiest nationalists and Congressmen of Gujarat and Bombay ran: " This public meeting....expresses its abhorrence for *the huge slaughter of animals going on in India for food*, fashion, sport.... and regrets to note that effective protective measures are not yet taken by the Government to stop the indiscriminate slaughter". [*Leader*, 12-4-1939]. The object of the Conference was to convert the whole of India to vegetarianism, a virtue actually enforced by the Haripura Congress just about this time. The description of the next session of the Cow Conference held at Nagpur, again under the presidentship of Mr. Loyalka, is even more affecting. A cow was again worshipped by the President: " The Puja ritual began with recitation of mantras. The mother cow was covered with a beautiful cloth. The cow made ' laghu-śankā ' (' short- call ') ; a God-on-earth (*i.e*, Brahman) caught the cow's urine and sprinkled the men and women present with it ; another God-on-earth took some of it in his palm and the sisters present applied it to their foreheads. The sisters sang songs in praise of the Mother......holy food was given to the cow to eat, fees were paid to the Brahmans." [*Bombay Samachar*, 3-4-1940].

The President, Mr. Loyalka, had also sent late in November, 1939, a telegram to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, appealing to him to take up the question of cow-protection in the political field. [*Bombay Samachar*, 1-12-1939]. A few months earlier, the Govardhan

Samsthā had " sent a deputation headed by Śri Chounḍe Maharaj, its founder, to the Hon. Mr. Kher, the Premier of the Bombay Government, and convinced him of the necessity of such a measure." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 16-4-1939] An appeal issued by the Dayā Prachāriṇi Sabha of Ahmedabad, for 'conservation of India's cattle wealth,' said among other things : " The appeal made in this matter by the President of the Bombay Jivadayā Sabhā to the All India Congress Committee, is proper. We do believe that the Congress Committee will take up this extremely important question....It is a matter of good fortune for the country that at present Congress Governments are ruling in eight Provinces in India....We therefore request the honoured leaders of the country, the members of the Congress Committee, to take up this question at the earliest opportunity." [*Gujarati Punch*, 13-8-1939].

And it seems that the Congress leaders in the Bombay Province were beginning, even before this appeal, to associate themselves actively with the question of cow protection. An influential deputation of the Gogrās Gojivadān Manḍal waited on the Revenue Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, at the Secretariat on 22-5-1939. The Secretary of the Manḍal described the various activities of the body : " He said that owing to this kind of the Manḍal's work of saving the lives of animals, (1) hundreds of lives are saved every year, (2) the cruel trade of butchers is stopped......after stating all these facts, the Secretary specially drew the attention of the Government to the stopping of cow slaughter etc.,......Mr. Morarji Desai heard all this patiently and expressed complete satisfaction with the useful work of the Manḍal.' [*Bombay Samachar*, 27-5-1939]. Another striking instance of the active sympathy shown by Congressmen and Congress Committees in the matter of cow protection was recorded two months later at Belapur Road, an important trade centre in Nagar District. In July, 1939, the local Hindus raised a protest against the Muslim butchers who used to sell only mutton but were now selling beef also in their shops. " On Tuesday, the 18th, the Merchants' Association *and the Taluka Congress Committee* held a meeting and passed the following resolution: '....*As the slaughter-house hurts the religious sentiments of the Hindus*, the slaughter-house should be abolished.' *The Chairman of the Belapur Road Congress Committee*, Śri Bālā Maharaj, *has actively taken the lead in this matter*." [*Trikāl*, 21-7-1939. Italics mine].

This infiltration of cow-politics into the main stream of governmental activities of the Congress Ministries was only one phase of the growing Hinduisation of the Congress regime. We have seen how even Indian Government officials stigmatised the U. P. Congress regime as "a Government of Bhikshuks (Brahman beggars) and Bhats (Brahman priests.)" We have seen what the Congress Government of Madras did for the Untouchables. The ghastly Biswa-Chandur case with its gruesome 'Black Hole' episode clearly showed the unseemly communal bias of the Central Provinces Congress Government. The whole disgraceful episode received severe castigation at the hands of two High Court Judges when they acquitted six Muslims sentenced to death and twenty-four to transportation for life by the Sessions Judge for the death of one Hindu in a communal riot. The entire Muslim male community of the village, "including minors, sick and aged," was rounded up by the police, paraded on a hot April day, and 145 of them locked up for forty-eight hours, practically without food, in a room 30 feet by 20 feet. [*Star of India*, 10-5-1940.] Mr. Justice Bose said in his judgment: "Over two hundred persons were paraded in the sun in the middle of a hot weather day until some vomitted with the heat, and later 145 persons were arrested and confined in a room 30 ft. by 20 ft. with practically no food on a hot weather night." [*Star of India*, 26-6-1940]. The attitude of the Congress Government as revealed in the Legislative Assembly is noteworthy: "Before any investigation was made, a debate was held in the Provincial Assembly, in the course of which the Congress Premier declared that it was not a case of riot but a carefully planned murder. He went so far as to indict the whole population of the village." ['The Meaning of Pakistan,' p. 133]. And this whole episode, a striking sample of Congress rule, was entirely blacked out by the Congress and Nationalist press. As the author of 'The Meaning of Pakistan,' says with some justice: "The High Court's findings would have shocked the country. They did not because the means of publicity were all in the hands of the Hindus." [P. 134.] But the acquittal did shock Mr. Gandhi. The Mahatma's stern sense of justice was shocked, for after brooding for a few weeks over the case he declared that the acquittal was due to "police bungling," and was therefore "a miscarriage of justice" and "a manifest failure of justice." [*Harijan*, 11-8-1940; quoted in *Statesman*, 24-1-1945]. This deep dissatisfaction with the escape of six human beings from hanging

deserves to be compared with the same Mahatma's uncompromising declaration : " I will not kill a cow for saving a human life, be it ever so precious." [' Young India,' (Ganesan) p. 409].

It will be even more to the point here to refer to Mr. Fazlul Haq's indictment of the Congress regime and his description of the " new technique " adopted by Congress Governments : " That technique consisted, among other things, in permitting local officials, specially the police, to effect a ' compromise,' after the Muslims of a locality had been oppressed, the terms of the compromise usually being that *the Muslims either ' voluntarily ' undertook not to eat beef or perform cow sacrifice....*" [*Star of India*, 21-12-1939. Italics mine.] This reminds one of the ' hartals ' declared by the Mahajans of Dasāḍā and Pāṭaḍi in August, 1936, on account of cow slaughter by Muslims. An Ahmedabad Muslim paper said that the Dasāḍā ' hartal ' was engineered by the Jains of Dasāḍā, Pāṭaḍi, Jhinjhuwāḍā, etc., against the Muslim Talukdar of Dasāḍā, their object being to force him to renounce in writing the old custom of his house of slaughtering cows on certain occasions. [*Dīn*, 17-8-1936]. It is interesting to note by the way that none is more enthusiastic today in the matter of cow worship than the Jains of Gujarat and Kathiawad ; it was the Mangrol Jains who kept up a long struggle with the late ruler of Mangrol, Shaikh Jahangirmian, because he had dared to abrogate an old convention according to which no cow could be slaughtered within the municipal limits of Mangrol city. And yet, it is still more interesting to note, Hemachandra, the great Jain saint and canonist and polymath of 12th century Gujarat, has in his ' Yogaśāstra ' poured scornful contempt upon Vedist Hindus for worshipping the ' ordure eating ' cow. Thus have Jainism and Vaishnavism come closer and closer in the last few centuries, so much so that Jains and Vaishnavas can intermarry provided they be of the same caste.

That all politically minded Hindus regarded the Congress rule as purely Hindu and orthodox Hindu rule, receives confirmation from an unimpeachable source, a well-known patriot of Nasik, as reported by the leading Poona paper : " The Makar Sankrant holiday social gathering of the Rāshṭriya Swarajya Sangh of Jalgaon (East Khandesh), was held under the presidentship of Mr. Śrirām Gosāvi......After the flag had been worshipped and saluted, Mr. Gosāvi said : ' The Makar Sankrant this year is really full of hope for us Hindus..The night of the Demons is past, and the day of the

Gods has dawned......*British rule has vanished* from the Province and *our Peshwa regime has begun*....We have vowed to make real by means of our determinatoin and our strength, the principle 'Hindustan belongs to the Hindus.'" [*Kesari*, 14-1-1939]. This identification of Congress rule with orthodox Hindu rule, and of Congress or Congress-patronised institutions with orthodox Hinduism, has been noticed with some uneasiness even by Gujarati and other followers of the Congress. A thoughtful reviewer of a Gujarati text book prescribed by the 'Gujarat Vidyāpīṭh' (the Congress 'University of Gujarat') said in a four column review: "The selections seem to have been made as if Hindu children alone were studying in middle schools......No wonder that for this reason Muslims etc., oppose the present educational scheme." [*Gujarati*, 28-4-1940]. Even the *Bombay Chronicle* was disturbed and protested rather weakly in a leading article against the religious implications of the term 'Vidyā-Mandir' and the Congress educational scheme hatched at Wardha under that name. It said that the Muslims had been alarmed by reports that Urdu schools had been closed down; that Muslim boys were being made to "offer with folded arms, along with Hindu boys, 'prārthanā' (worship) before the image of Saraswati" (the Goddess of Learning), "or to greet one another with the words 'Rāmjiki Jai;" that the Muslims feared that "a subtle attack on Muslim culture has begun;" and that the alarm had "spread frightfully." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 18-10-1938]. Less stutteringly apologetic and more outspoken was the ultra-Congress paper of Kathiawad: "At present the principle of keeping political questions apart from religion seems to be the correct one. To make of India a 'Mātā' or a 'Devi', to make 'Mandirs' of schools, to hoist the national flag on institutions commonly owned by all, to insist on prayers in political assemblies or in educational institutions,—all these things require to be reconsidered." [*Phulchhāb*, 20-6-1941]. Even ardent young Hindu nationalists of Ahmedabad came to see, though rather late, the egregious folly of foisting upon all Indians that rankly idolatrous hymn of hate against Muslims, the 'Vande Mataram' song, as the 'national' anthem. When a furious controversy raged over this issue amongst the students of the Gujarat College at Ahmedabad, half a dozen Gujarati youths, "noted student workers" of Gujarat, said in a public statement: "......It must be admitted that the whole song is tainted with religiosity—with Hinduism." And they rightly pointed out that in

its original context the song is sung by Hindu "rebels against Islam." [*Independent India*, 15-12-1940].

Disillusioned Congressmen of some standing have also condemned this orthodox Hindu Avatar of the so-called 'National' Congress. Under the caption 'Why I left the Congres,' Mr. N. N. Menon complained: "It [Congress] was virtually turned into a religious institution for eulogising the Mahatma and for the propagation of Gandhism which is nothing but revivalism....Harping on the slogans of 'Rām Rāj,' 'Varnasrama Dharma,' etc., has driven India to a stage when vivisection has become a historical necessity." [*Sunday Observer*, 21-6-1942]. Even a Congress Minister, Mr. S. Ramanathan, said in a public speech at Madras recently: "The people of this country have to unlearn the wrong ideology that has been inculcated into them by the Mahatma during the last twenty-five years." And as regards the Mahatmic Law of Nature, Caste, this Congress Minister said very rightly though very late: "The same Varnasrama Dharma is responsible for the misery of the Scheduled Castes and exclusiveness practised towards the Muslims." [*Sunday Observer*, 21-11-1944]. The infinite harm done by the unmistakably Hindu ceremonial adopted by the Congress seems to have been sensed much earlier by another Congress Minister, as recorded by a Muslim paper: "The Congress Minister Mr. Morarji Desai has issued an urgent circular as Secretary, Gujarat Congress Committee, directing that in Congress ceremonies like flag-hoisting, etc., Hindu religious rites and customs should not be employed." [*Muslim Gujarat*, 15-3-1940]. Another prominent Congressman of Bombay has publicly admitted, though in a round about manner, the increasing identification of Congress nationalism with Hinduism. Presiding at a lecture given by the late Sheriff of Bombay, Mr. Baig, the Parsi Congressman Mr. M. R. Masani said that "if there was to be a community of Indians, the communities of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs must first cease to exist," and then added that "in the Congress fold, Hinduism and nationalism were mistaken for each other." [*Eastern Times*, 19-12-1943.] In view of all these wailings and breast beatings by the elect themselves, it is not necessay to elaborate further the point that the Congress is an orthodox Hindu body, and that under the fostering care of the Mahatma it has become a champion and revivalist missionary of orthodox caste Hinduism. It may also be noted that Mr. Gandhi himself has ad-

mitted that the Congress is composed chiefly of Hindus : " Consider for a moment what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden......where will the Congressmen composed chiefly of Hindus be ? " [*Harijan*, 21-10-1939].

XVII

CONGRESS AND THE HINDU REACTION.

It is necessary to repeat that the preceding chapters on language and cow politics are not irrelevant digressions; they are vitally relevant to the problem of untouchability, as revealing the soul of Hindu India in reaction, a revivalist reaction, led by Mr. Gandhi, against the 'modernism' of the rationalising, westernising —what I would call, and have called, 'Hellenising'—movement ushered in about a century and a quarter ago by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other ardent advocates of English education and western ways of thinking. If the cultural and spiritual revolution—it was nothing less than a revolution, perhaps unprecedented in the last two thousand years of Indian history—started by the Raja and his colleagues and disciples in the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century had proceeded unchecked and unthwarted, it is difficult to imagine where India would have been today educationally, culturally and politically. But even before the Indian Universities were founded in the late fifties of that century, alarmed Brahmanism had already risen in revolt, and an orthodox reaction had set in, led, not as one would expect by old fashioned Sanskrit Pandits, but by the English educated products of High Schools and Colleges, inflamed by the new heady wine of 'nationalism,' from among the disciples of the Royist pioneers. Professor Bimanbehari Majumdar says in his valuable study of political thought in India: "The [Democratic and Nationalist] movement started by the Raja received a great impetus from the simultaneous operation of five correlated forces. These were, wider diffusion of English education, researches of the Orientalists into the past history of India, *reaction against Western civilisation in favour of Hinduism*, rapid improvement in the means of communication, and political movements in Western countries." ['History of Political Thought' —Vol. I—Bengal,' p. 232.]

About the third cause, italicised above, the Professor writes: "The third cause which was responsible for the spread of nationalist ideas was a strong reaction against Western religion and civilisation, set in generally by men who had received the highest Western culture. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore may be called the leader

and pioneer of this movement......The diffusion of knowledge about ancient India as a result of the researches of the Orientalists further strengthened this movement." [*Ibid.*, p. 239.] And this new knowledge about ancient India further strengthened this orthodox 'strong reaction' also. For the first time educated Indians came to realise that there was something like a real history of ancient India, thanks to the ceaseless and selfless researches of Western orientalists, and specially of that young marvel, James Prinsep, who deciphered the ancient Kharoshṭhi and Brāhmi scripts and thus made it possible to read the innumerable ancient Indian inscriptions which had been a sealed book to Indian Pandits for a millennium and more. Among a people with very primitive ideas of history, and prone to mix up myth and history inextricably, a natural result of this new knowledge was to strengthen this reaction against western culture ; for it created a highly exaggerated picture of an imaginary Golden Age in the dim past, considerably refracted by the sentimental rose coloured haze through which it was seen by emotional youths fired by a new and unknown enthusiasm and glamour for ancient culture and along with it for everything coming down from ancient times. This unconscious or conscious perversion of ancient Indian history has continued to this day with the result that bumptious 'nationalists' who are also shallow sciolists, innocent even of the proper pronunciations of important names in ancient Indian history, prate and rave with impartial fervour about the 'golden prime' of the undoubtedly historical Samudragupta and about the imaginary one of the as undoubtedly mythical Vikramāditya. This blind worship of an imaginary golden age in the unknown past, and the consequent reaction against modern western ideas and influences, have been unwittingly or designedly aided and abetted by a good many westerners,—by enthusiasts or fanatics like Woodroffe and Sister Nivedita, and by proved charlatans and impostors—and worse—like Madame Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater. To cite a typical instance quite pertinent to our inquiry, it was Mrs. Besant who invented an esoteric spiritual reason for segregating Untouchable boys from high caste ones in schools ; she solemnly declared that the unclean aura of the Pariah urchin would do grave damage to the pure aura of the Brahman boy if both were made to sit together in the same class. And, it may be added, Mrs. Besant stoutly defended caste, defended idolatry on the ground that the

idol " forms a magnetic communication between the divine form and the worshipper," and explained away ' linga ' worship by glorifying the ' linga ' into a " pillar of fire, typifying creative energy."

In Bengal, the *Hindoo Patriot*, the mouthpiece of this new nationalism, was founded by Girish Chandra Ghosh before 1856. A decade or so later Chandranath Bose, M.A., " played a prominent part in the revival of Hinduism. He explained the spiritual and cultural significance of Hinduism in his Bengali work entitled ' Hindutva '." [*Ibid.*, p. 276]. It would be interesting to know whether Mr. V. D. Savarkar's manifesto of Militant Hinduism, also entitled ' Hindutva,' owes anything to this Bengali predecessor. The great nationalist Nabagopal Mitra (nicknamed ' National ') maintained that " the basis of national unity in India has been the Hindu religion." [*Ibid.*, p. 294.] And Nabagopal's political guru was the famous reactionary, Rajnarain Bose, who called himself the ' Grandfather of Nationalism in Bengal ' [*Ibid.*, p. 241.] Jogendranath Vidyabhushan, M.A., proposed in the seventies that Sanskritised Hindi should be the ' national ' language of this Hindu ' nation.' This proposal had been made in Gujarat by the famous ' reformer ' and poet, Narmadāshankar, a decade earlier; and, what is more remarkable, as early as 1856, Narmad had, in his famous essay on ' Swadeshābhimān,' anticipated ' Natonal ' Nabagopal also and identified ' Swadesh ' practically with ' Hindu desh,' and the Indian ' nation ' with the Hindus. It is also worth noting that the young ' reformer ' Narmad became a blind champion of extreme orthodoxy soon after he turned forty.

The identification of extreme political radicalism with social and religious orthodoxy and reaction reached its climax in Bengal in Sisir Kumar Ghosh (born in 1840), the founder and first editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, about whom Professor Majumdar says: " It is significant that Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the first extremist leader of the post-Congress era, saluted Sisir Kumar as his political guru." [*Ibid.*, p. 322]. And S. K. Ghosh also identified the ' Indian nation ' with the Hindus: " As a nation we live......in our own country with a language, literature, genius, *philosophy and religion of our own*." [*Ibid.*, p. 336; quoted from *A. B. Patrika*, 1-9-1870.] And even the quite modern Professor Majumdar seems to agree with this identification, for he proceeds: " Such an appeal to the cultural basis of political unity and political power has been a potent factor in the establishment of nation states in modern

Greece and Italy. In the seventies of the last century the religious prophets like Sri Ramakrishna [Paramahamsa] and Swami Dayananda did much more than the Orientalists to make the people of India proud of their own culture." [*Ibid.*, p. 336]. This identification of Hindus alone with the ' Indian nation ' can unfortunately be traced back even to the father of Indian social reform, Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He had taken " a prominent part " in the establishment of the *Hindoo* College in the second decade of the last century. About the journal started by the alumni of this College, a contemporary wrote: " The object of this journal is the introduction of *the Hindoos* in the science of government and jurisprudence." [*Calcutta Quarterly Magazine*, 1833.] The journal was one of several periodicals run by students of the Hindoo College, another being the *Hindoo Pioneer*. They had also a *Hindoo* literary society. [*Op. cit.*, pp. 8, 88, 94, etc.] The Muslim was not in the picture at all.

In the Bombay Province this identification of the Indian nation with the Hindus was made very early, as early as 1848-50, in the remarkable Marathi ' Hundred Letters ' on socio-religious and political matters published by that very remarkable man Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh, over the once famous pen-name ' Lokahitavādi ' in the *Prabhākar* newspaper of Bombay. Himself the son of a Brahman Sardar of the last Peshwa, his mordant and even savage criticism of the Peshwa regime based on caste, of its degenerate Brahman entourage, and of the caste system itself, has rarely been outdone by even the most rabid anti-Brahmans of later times. He had a wonderfully objective vision which saw the weaknesses of his own people as well as the disadvantages of foreign rule, however beneficent it might be. Naturally he became the main target of attack when the orthodox reaction in the Maharashtra culminated two decades later in the brilliant but shallow pamphleteer, Vishnu Ḳrishna Chiplunkar, who may also be regarded as the guru of Tilak in social and political matters. And, yet, in spite of his phenomenally clear vision and almost cynical anti-Brahmanism, whenever Gopalrao wrote of the country and its people, of social or political reform, or of Swaraj, or ' Swadesh,' he consistently spoke of or implied ' Hindu ' people, ' Hindu ' reform, ' Hindu ' Swaraj and ' Hindu desh,'—for him as for the Bengali patriots and the later Gujarati reformer, Narmad, non-Hindus simply did not exist. [' Śatapatri ' (1940), *passim*.] The editor of this new edition of the

'Hundred Letters' has very lamely tried thus to explain away this communal obsession : "Intelligent readers need not be told that although he everywhere says 'Hindu,' 'Hindu,' the word in present-day parlance is equivalent to 'Hindi,'" (*i.e.*, 'Indian'). [*Ibid.*, p. 328]. This is, of course, mere special pleading which cannot deceive any 'intelligent reader.'

At its inception in the eighties, the Indian National Congress wisely gave up this intensely communal ideology which had combined political radicalism with extreme socio-religious conservatism. This new liberalism of the Congress based on English liberalism as interpreted by Dadabhai Naoroji and Ranade, limited the institution's influence to the intelligentsia ; it penetrated down to the half literate among the masses only when Tilak, taking the cue from the Bengali nationalists, came to the fore in the double role of leader of political extremists and champion of orthodox Hinduism. He became extremely popular by opposing social legislation, sticking to 'dhoti' and 'Poona shoes,' associating himself with cow protection and inaugurating the Ganapati celebrations as a counter-attraction against Muharram celebrations and as a means of rallying orthodox Hinduism. Professor T.S. Shejvalkar has admirably contrasted the liberal and farsighted views of Gopalrao Deshmukh, far in advance of his times and education, with the short-sighted bigotry of Chiplunkar and Tilak, both University graduates and admirers of Mill and Spencer ; and he has rightly said that these two reactionaries put back the cultural progress of Maharashtra by two generations. About Tilak he makes this subacid but just comment: "This learned man who had studied Mill and Spencer never felt that he was making any mistake in starting the Ganapati festival and thereby giving new life to idolatry." [*Mahārāshtra Sāhitya Patrikā*, July, 1940.]

With the advent of the Mahatma, Congress politics assumed the form of a religious creed, and patriotism came to mean intense distrust and dislike of everything of western, and specially English, origin—except political catchwords and claptrap. The negative and more catching—because much the easier and more palatable—part of our nationalism is this dislike and distrust of what is foreign and new. Hence, conservative reaction in socio-religious matters has naturally allied itself with nationalist and political extremism, and those political leaders have proved most successful with the populace who have appealed to this traditional negative conser-

vatism of India, with its natural socio-religious inertia, by practising 'orthodoxy' in dress and food, in social observances and public manners, in the paraphernalia and conduct of political assemblies. Folding of hands has replaced the western hand-shake, the bare or carpeted ground has taken the place of chairs, the 'dhoti' has ousted trousers; and Ahmedabadi 'Hindustani' is taking the place of English. Half baked Congress Ministers boast with childish pride that they went into the Assemblies in 'dhoti' and sandals; and the press publishes pictures of the highest Congress executive met in serious deliberation, lolling or sprawling or lying prone on the ground in a variety of picturesquely languorous though not very seemly poses. This is supposed to reflect our proud nationalism, as opposed to the 'slavish' garments of old and to the irksome foreign discipline of sitting bolt upright on Satanic chairs. When the late Mr. Shapurji Saklatwala, M.P., visited India in 1926, we are told, "Mr. Gandhi asked him what his final message for India would be. Saklatwala said: 'For God's sake, my dear Gandhi, wear a pair of trousers.'" [*Dawn*, 30-1-1944]. It is frightful to think what would happen if Mr. Gandhi were to take up this mocking challenge of the Puckish Parsi; it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that three-fourths of his followers would desert him if he were to put on trousers with a long coat and Kathiawadi turban,—and more than ninety-five per cent. if he were to go back to the frock-coat and top hat of his early London days. Be it noted in passing that even eminent Congressmen may sport North Indian breeches, but they must religiously eschew the hated hat, borrowed from the westerners, as being the most unnational part of the costume deriving from them. Once Mr. Gandhi had a brilliant inspiration years ago, and he actually gave a signed *fatwa* in his paper in favour of the sun hat or 'Sola' topee, provided it was worn with a Khaddar 'dhoti' and shirt. Either this artistic combination was too exqusitely aesthetic for our politician patriots grimly bent on the 'struggle,' or Mr. Gandhi wisely saw in time the unpatriotic nature of the *risque* concession granted by him; but whatever the reason, the useful sun hat never came into fashion in Congress circles.

This little digression on clothes is not without a meaning; it has its own deep philosophy which only an Indian Carlyle could adequately expound in a new 'Sartor Resartus.' One incipient Carlyle who is also an 'Āyurveda Viśārada,' *i.e.*, a doctor of Ayurvedic medicine, and therefore competent to judge garments from a

hygienic point of view also, discussed the uniform proposed for schoolboys during the Congress regime and wrote, strongly protesting against trousers or shorts : " It is not desirable from the point of view of Hindu culture and religion that all students should wear shorts. Most Hindus wear 'dhotis.'" And he appealed to all Hindus and Hindu leaders proud of their own religion and culture to make strenuous efforts to protect their culture and religion thus assailed by shorts. [*Kesari*, 11-8-1939.] Another Hindu Carlyle was so unnational as to pour contempt on the 'pokaḷ kāshṭā' (which, I confess, is an untranslatable sartorial mystery) of the 'ḍhagaḷ' (unwieldy) 'dhoti', and was so un-Hindu as to say that the great Shivaji and his father used to put on Muslim breeches and even to wear Muslim beards ; and he came to the grossly unpatriotic conclusion that putting on a particular kind of dress was not a matter of any import in either winning or losing Swaraj. [*Lokāmānya*, 1-5-1943]. Even more startlingly revolutionary were the views expressed by Sir Shafā 'at Ahmad Khan. Indian High Commissioner in South Africa, in a speech at the Muslim Hostel, Allahabad, —rendered still more sensational by the unwittingly Rabelaisian caption, 'Dhotis and Pyjamas Gone' : "'Dhotis and pyjamas are gone,' remarked Sir Shafā'at Ahmad Khan, speaking of the standard of living of the Indians in South Africa. He said that since the Indians had realised that their condition could not be bettered unless they raised the standard of their living, they had been trying to raise the standard, which was now much higher than that of Indians in India." [*Leader*, 9-11-1943.] It will be seen, in view of these varied views and the tremendous importance attached by the Mahatma and the Congress to the subject, that this sartorial digression has a profound bearing on the philosophical basis of Indian nationalism under the Mahatmic dispensation, and dress plays a very important part in the spiritual reaction against western Satanism that has been in full swing for the last twenty-five years.

There has been plenty of suppressed grumbling against this weirdly spiritual and inanely sanctimonious turn taken by Congress politics under Mahatmic inspiration ; in the most intellectual and politically minded circles, even of the Khaddar clad elect, we hear scathing denunciatins of this 'spiritual' insanity. But it would not be fair to quote here what a Congress dignitary or a 'Right Honourable' gentleman calls Mr. Gandhi in private conversation even though in the press he may avow himself passionately devoted

to the Mahatma and call him an Avatar, a second Jesus who is more than Jesus, and who is to save the world after this war, and what not. Nor would it be much to the point to reproduce here the opinion about the Mahatma far more honestly expressed by the famous non-political Mahatma of Abu, the late Vijayaśānti Sūri, though published to the world by Mr. H.L. Matthews in one of his refreshingly outspoken articles on Indian politics in the *New York Times Magazine*, and reproduced with uncommon courage by the leading Congress paper of Bombay. [*Sunday Chronicle*, 22-8-1943]. Restricting ourselves to the Indian press, we find these underground rumblings coming to the surface now and then in Nationalist and even ardently pro-Congress journals. For instance, a Nationalist Marathi paper that has recently taken to Mahatma worship wrote : " The aim of Gandhism is to revive our past culture. As a result, not only is the Hindu-Muslim problem not likely to be solved, but on the contrary the cultural differences between the two will become aggravated." [*Dhanurdhāri*, 27-4-1940]. The mouthpiece of the three million Bengalis settled in Bihar has been a consistent critic of the ' spiritual ' activities of the Congress, and going to the root of the matter it said about the Mahatma: " He has converted politics into a sort of mysticism and has established in the country a rule of totem and taboo. In a very real sense Mr. Gandhi's regime has been a reactionary regime......" [*Behar Herald*, 11-2-1941]. In reviewing a pamphlet indicting the recent disastrous activities of the Congress, a staunch Congress paper sadly confessed that " things in Indian political life would have been better if India had the good fortune to have a straightforward downright politician instead of a Mahatmic leader to mystify and confuse the masses." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 27-9-1943]. The same paper had written earlier in even plainer terms : " As it is, religion, or too much religion, has been the bane of our political life in this country....It is to be confessed that the Mahatma is responsible for importing religion in Indian politics." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 2-8-1940].

Dr. Sumant Mehta wrote just about ten years ago : " In the last fifteen or sixteen years superstition and religious hypocrisy have increased in Gujarat." [*Prasthān*, Jeṭh, 1990 V. S. (June-July, 1934).] In the article I have already quoted from, Dr. Mehta writes after nine years of further experience of the Gandhian reaction : " The entire social life of Hindus is bounded by caste rules and caste prejudices. Mr. Gandhi shudders at [the idea of] widow

marriage and he has sung the praises of the holiness of Hindu widows. These praises are utterly wrong, and such as to lead people in the wrong direction." [*Hindustan-Prajāmitra*, (Diwali Number), 29-10-1943]. I have long been convinced that if the Gandhian reaction against western ideas succeeds, enforced widowhood and even 'Sati' will return, as the average Hindu, however highly educated he may be, has a soft corner for the 'Sati' ideal of womanhood deep down in his heart. In 1928 occurred a remarkable case of Sati at Bāṛh (Bihar) which ultimately ended in the persons involved being sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for participating in the offence. These accused set up the astounding plea that they had nothing to do with the firing of the funeral pile, and that it was the spiritual fire emanating from the person of the inspired Sati that had set the pile aflame. Even more remarkable was the fact that the leading Hindi Congress paper of Patna, edited by a Master of Arts and Member of the Legislative Council, strongly censured the High Court judges, who had sentenced the accused, as western materialists who were constitutionally incapable of seeing the deep spirituality of the Sati ideal, or of realising that the spiritual fervour of the Sati could literally set her, and through her the funeral pile, on fire. [*Times of India*, 7-8-1928 (leader).] About the same case the leading Congress paper of Patna, the *Searchlight*, said: " Sati represents the acme of moral perfection ....A pure Sati—pure in the sense of voluntariness—yet invokes the profound reverence of all Hindus who have not divested themselves of their age-long culture." [Quoted in *Modern Review*, September, 1928]. Another exactly similar case is reported from Kuberpur, Dist. Agra, U.P.: " Pandit Ramaprasad died after an illness of twenty four hours....His wife Kalavati put on her finery, piled up the funeral pyre with her own hands and burnt herself on it by *producing fire from her hair*....On the spot where the 'sati' burnt herself crowds of people are gathering." [*Bombay Samāchār*, 15-1-1937.] And only a few months ago the Congress paper of Kathiawad went into raptures over the suicide of a widow by pouring methylated spirit on her clothes and setting fire to them; so, pouring the spiritual spirit of utter contempt on Bentinck's anti-Sati law and making a bonfire of it the paper ranted: " Champāben is an instance to show that the writ of this law does not run in the empire of love!..Champā is gone but she has left an ideal behind. Blessed are such heroic women!" [*Phulchhāb*, 29-9-1944]. This

passionate avowal and glorification of the 'Sati' ideal appears on the last page of the paper; and by a strange chance, on the first page is published a photograph of the late Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi publicly washing the feet of her lord and master Mahatma Mohandasji, thus aptly complementing and completing the grand old self-effacing 'door-mat' ideal of Indian womanhood. It may also be noted that the graduate editor of the *Phulchhāb* is the most popular man of letters in the whole of Gujarat and Kathiawad today, as poet and novelist, as a collector and singer of folk-songs, as a lecturer and rhapsodist, and also as a worshipper of the Mahatma.

I have very little doubt that the Gandhian gospel of Hindu nationalism is responsible for this throw back to ideas and ideals of pre-British days. Even staunch Congressmen have come to realise this fact after years of devoted work as loyal Congressmen. Mr. Jagat Narain Lal, who joined the Satyagraha movement in 1920, resigned his Government post in Bihar, and went to jail in 1920 and 1932, wrote in the *Indian Nation* of Patna, giving nine reasons why he left the Satyagraha movement; and two of these are worth noting here: "Why do I oppose the Satyagraha movement?...... (3) Because it generates in effect a very large volume of hatred and ill-will......(5) Because it banks upon the superstitions and credulities of the people." [Quoted in *Leader* 4-4-1941.] Urging that a 'philosophical' (*i.e.*, cultural) revolution like the one started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy must first 'complete itself' before self-rule could become possible in India, a thoughtful writer said in a defunct 'rationalist' magazine: "Mahatma Gandhi has already set in motion a most terrible reaction against this half-born revolution"; and, as a result, "Gandhism is to-day strengthening the bonds that bind men to a decadent system of thought and behaviour." [*Reason*, November, 1940].

It is also necessary to note here the humiliating fact that all the foreign observers who have travelled in India in the last few years have taunted us, of course very politely, for our addiction to 'spirituality' and our helpless bondage to unprogressive ideas and ideals of a dead past. To speak nothing of Europeans and Americans, even sympathetic Orientals like Turks and Iranians, Egyptians and Chinamen, one and all have regretted, very courteously but with scarcely veiled amusement and even contempt, our phenomenal 'spirituality' and religion-minded conservatism. Speaking last year before the students of the Calcutta University, Mr. Lin

Yutang asked Indians to be 'modern minded' and said : "I think India has got too much of religion and can well afford to do with less of it......No nation except India can produce a modern saint.... India is suffering from an overdose of spirituality." [*Sunday Chronicle*, 26-3-1944]. When Mr. Lin Yutang spoke of a 'modern saint,' he evidently meant the Mahatma. How could the ignorant Chinaman know that every district and every taluka and every town of our gloriously spiritual country has a Mahatma, or a Maharaj, or a Buwā, or a Bāwā, or a Pīr, who is the vicegerent of Divinity, if not Divinity Himself? In a speech delivered in 1891, Ranade—(of all persons!)—said : "India can export spiritual truth to the world for centuries." [Quoted in *Dnyān Prakāsh*, 16-1-1936.] Whether this be true of 'spiritual truth' or not, India could undoubtedly export shiploads of holy exponents of 'spiritual truth'; and of these holy men, none would be more representative of the eternal and changeless Hindu conservatism than the Congress Mahatma.

XVIII

A HISTORICAL RETROSPECT.

The Hindu reaction whose progress through the last century and more we have briefly sketched above is not a new or temporary phenomenon; it is only the last in a long series of reactions against foreign cultural invasions that can be traced back to the incursion of the foreign pre-Vedic Aryans in the Panjab. Hinduism has always yielded to such outside forces in temporal and political matters ; it has even invited them for various reasons. Commenting on the common cause made by the 'Hindu aristocrats and zamindars' of Bengal with the English against Murshid Kuli Khan in the 18th century, Professor Kalikinkar Dutt cheerfully writes : "This was quite in keeping with the traditions of Indian history. Since the days of Alexander's invasion, it had become, as it were, the fashion of the aggrieved or the weaker party to invite or welcome a foreign power." [' Studies in the History of the Bengal Subah,' p. 100, f. n. 20]. For instance, Muslims were thus invited to Gujarat by the aggrieved Brahman minister of King Karan. And the most recent instance of this interesting 'tradition' or 'fashion' was, perhaps, the 'Quit India' invitation to our spiritual kinsmen, the Japanese. But if thus India has ever been indifferent to matters temporal and political, it has always preserved its spiritual heritage intact through scores of such political invasions ; in the spiritual and socio-religious fields Hinduism has never yielded and ever reasserted itself. That is why the qualifying epithet 'sanātana' (eternal) which is always added to the Hindu 'dharma,' is not a mere boast but a reality ; it is this unique power of resistance and resilience, recuperation and reassertion that has enabled Hinduism to withstand wave after wave of foreign invasion by rude and aggressive Mlechchha (*i.e.*, barbarous or semi-barbarous) hordes like the pre-Vedic Aryans, Achaemenian Iranians, Hellenic and Bactrian Greeks, Parthians, Śakas, Huns, and a score of other peoples down to the medieval Muslims and the modern barbarians from the Satanic West, the English. And the last have been the most Satanic of them all, for, as rightly said by Mr. Gandhi, they have shaken "the very foundations of our thought," [' Dharma-manthana ', p. 65] ; and Britain has 'ruined India not only politically and econo-

the quarterly 'Zartoshti,' I myself have said most of these thing though quite tentatively. Iyengar says that the Gita also is an Āgamic text [*Op. cit.*, p. 110], and that the greatest figure in the latest Brahmanic revival in ancient history, Śankarāchārya, adopted Āgamic and Tantric idolatrous rites in the 'Smārta' form of worship inaugurated by him. [Pp. 432-433.] The fact that the Hindu 'Sandhyā' prayers are entirely Āgamic and Tantric in their ritual was shown by Gopal Hari Deshmukh in his curious Gujarati work, 'Āgama Prakāśa,' published about seventy years ago. Iyengar boldly calls the fundamental doctrines and practices of current Hinduism 'Dasyu' doctrines and practices—after the indigenous dark-skinned Hindus called "Dasyus' in the Vedas and reviled as black non-Aryan ('anārya') 'Dāsas,'—and thus gives the quietus to the obsolescent if not quite obsolete theory—what Chattopadhyaya calls the 'Aryan superstition'—that the present day Hindus are 'Aryans' and Hinduism is an Aryan socio-religious system representative of Aryan culture.

Even more uncompromisingly pro-Dravidian are the views of the author of a book entitled 'Dravidian and Aryan' who asserts, according to a ruffled reviewer : "The Brahmans of India were not Aryans but Dravidians. They learned Sanskrit, the language of the conqueror, for very much the same reason as we learn English. While the Dravidians were thus Aryanised in language, the Aryans were Dravidianised in culture. The caste system is a purely Dravidian institution....Modern Hinduism is purely Dravidian." [*Modern Review*, May, 1939]. As for 'Aryan' blood, and fatuous claims of direct descent from Vedic or pre-Vedic Aryan Rishis, the Bengali Professor of Linguistics, Batakrishna Ghosh, says with incisive finality : "No Indian today, outside a lunatic asylum, would claim to be a pure Aryan." [*Indian Culture*, April-June, 1942]. In fact, for peoples of lands south of the Vindhya mountains, it is even worse than lunacy to prate about 'Aryan' blood and 'Aryan Culture'; as late as the seventh century A.D., the great champion of Vedic Brahmanism, Kumārila Bhatta, in his vast scholium on the 'Śabara-bhāshya' (an ancient commentary on Jaimini's 'Mīmāmsa' Aphorisms) declared, in confirmation of both Jaimini and Śabarasvāmin, that all peoples living in lands south of the Vindhya mountains were 'Mlechchhas,' *i.e.*, non-Aryan barbarians. ['Tantravārtika,' Ganganath Jha's translation, Introd., p. 16, and text, p. 186.] There is reason to believe, on the other hand, that

even as early as the later Vedic age, round about 1,000 B.C., pure Aryan blood had already become scarce in North India itself, and thereafter even the diluted Aryanism of the Vedic people was totally swamped and swallowed up by the resurgent ' Sanātana ' Hindu ' dharma,' so that the later indigenous ' Śruti ' of the Upanishads quietly usurped the place of the older ' Śruti ' of Vedic hymns ; the most important Vedic gods, like Indra and Varuṇa and Agni, became very minor and insignificant godlings in the all-absorbing Hindu pantheon ; and the pristine ' Sanātana ' Hindu religion, with its pre-Vedic tenets and rites and gods and idols, reasserted itself.

The Aryan invaders left at least the impress of their name on Hindu culture and considerably influenced the vocabularies of North Indian languages, although these retained a very large number of ' deśya ' (*i.e.*, indigenous) words, while their syntax remained entirely Dravidian. But all subsequent invaders and their cultures were almost totally swallowed up and superseded by indigenous Hinduism ; the aggressors mostly became good Brahmans or Kshatriyas, and devout Buddhists or Śaivas or Vaishṇavas. So completely were these outsiders absorbed that it is difficult to identify the contributions made by their own cultures to the general stream of Hindu culture. On the contrary, Manu makes the heroically impudent claim that every land on the face of the earth must learn its civilisation and culture from Brahmans born in North India. [Manu, II, 20]. But from data furnished by works like Profêssor Hazra's ' Studies in the Puranic Records,' traces of foreign scientific and technical terms found in mathematical treatises, etc., and overwhelmingly foreign names like that of the great astrologer and mathematician, Varāhamihira, it is arguable that the remarkable outburst of intellectual and scientific activities in Sanskrit in the first six or seven centuries of the Christian era, was the harvest and aftermath of fruitful hybridisation consequent on the wholesale admission of inquisitive and energetic foreigners, and a late flowering of the liberalising tendencies of heresies like the Buddhist and others, and also of the Vrishala (or Śūdra) or foreign anti-Brahmanical sway of the Mauryas, Bactrian Greeks, Kushāṇas, etc. It is further arguable that the reactionary Brahmanical Hindu revival under the Guptas (cir. 250-700A.D.) only served to fossilise this hybrid culture and to petrify castes in trying to minimise the social disturbances caused by the absorption of these foreign elements. But the Puranas have

considerably covered up the tracks to complete the work of absorption.

Not only has periodically resurgent Hinduism absorbed foreign conquerors from the pre-Vedic Aryans downwards, it has even converted their aggressive conquests into imaginary conquests by the conquered themselves, by means of the wonderful mythopoeic powers of the Hindu genius which has thus created such mythical and non-existent Hindu conquerors of the Śakas as Vikramāditya and Śālivāhana ; just as the anti-Vedic heresiarch Buddha was daringly converted into an Avatar of Vishnu. But in spite of these numerous instances of absorption and assimilation, the Muslims, who began their aggressive incursions as early as the beginning of the eighth century with the conquest of Sind by Muhammad bin Qāsim, have not only proved immune against these remarkable absorptive powers, they have, on the contrary, converted millions of Hindus, including countless Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaiśyas, to their own faith, and have continued to do so to this day. What is the cause of this glaring exception ? It is vaguely believed that just when the Muslims appeared in India, Hinduism was losing or had lost its absorptive powers, and that its decay had begun. Had this been really the case, very few Hindus would have survived the seven centuries of Islamic rule with powerful Sultanates spread all over India,—at Delhi and Jaunpur and Gaur, in Malwa and Khandesh and Gujarat, in Kashmir and Sind and the Deccan. I think that Hinduism has always been and is today as alive and vigorous as it was twelve hundred or fifteen hundred years ago ; and I think that it failed to absorb Muslim invaders simply because it could, and can, absorb only such peoples as are idolatrous or prone to idolatry. That seems to be the reason why Hinduism has failed to absorb not only the intensely aggressive, powerful and warlike Muslim conquerors, but also very small and weak communities, settled in various parts of India long before the earliest Muslim conquest,—as refugees like the very small and unwarlike communities of Syrian Christians of Madras and Cochin Jews, or as mariners and traders like the Arabs settled in the dominions of the Zamorin. These small communities, instead of being converted, have converted the Hindus to their faiths. Even more remarkable is the case of the Parsis settled in Gujarat. We have stories in the Puranas, and even historical instances, of Mithra-worshipping Iranians or semi-Iranians like the Magas, Pahlavas and Śakas becoming Sun-wor-

shipping Maga Brahmans or Śiva-worshipping rulers of vast territories all over India ; but these must have been idolatrous Mithra-worshipping hordes from the outlying provinces of the vast Parthian and Sassanian Empires. For Mithra worship that spread to Italy and far away Britain was an idolatrous cult, quite distinct from Zoroastrianism. These hordes brought with them the image of the Sun God wearing breeches and topboots and sacred girdle, described by Varāhamihira in his Brihat-Samhitā and actually found in existing temples of the Sun in India. [*Vide* R. G. Bhandarkar's 'Śaivism and Vaishnavism,' pp. 153-155.] But still it is remarkable that the handful of Parsis settled in Gujarat have remained unabsorbed in spite of their affinities with the Hindus in the matter of Sun and Fire worship and a hereditary priesthood ; and it is still more remarkable that though settled in Gujarat as far north as Broach, they have never had any the least connection with the great Sun temple at Modhera in North Gujarat, dating at least from the 13th century, with its distinctly Mithraic idol of the Sun God. [Plate III—' Sūrya ', in A. B. Keith's ' Mythology of All the Races, Vol. VI, ' Indian.'] The only reason for this immunity of the Parsis seems to be, as I have pointed out elsewhere, their faith in a Supreme Almighty God and their distinctly non-idolatrous and even anti-idolatrous religion. [' Dinshah Irani Memorial Volume,' pp. 117-118.] These facts seem to shew that Hinduism has always failed to absorb people of monotheistic and non-idolatrous or iconoclastic faiths,—people who have a living faith in one God and none in idols.

Though the Hindus did admit outsiders into their fold, there is a profound difference between the Hindu and the Muslim (or Christian) methods of conversion and inclusion of aliens : Islam and Christianity are universal and also individual faiths, while Hinduism is bound up with and limited to the all-important, all-embracing unit of caste. Hence, conversion to Islam or Christianity makes the new entrant at a bound a full member of the whole communion, with legal and scriptural rights of unrestricted commensality and connubium, without any social or ritual disabilities imposed by religion or law ; while a convert to Hinduism must enter a caste, a matter of infinite difficulty as caste has always been a matter of birth and heredity.—That is why any conversion to Hindusim worth the name has been *en masse*, by tribes and septs which became new castes or sub-castes in the Hindu fold with nominal ascription to

one of the theoretical four chief castes. A striking recent attempt at such conversion was Swami Shraddhanand's heroic scheme of reconverting the Malkana tribe of Rajput Muslims. This tribal conversion has naturally led to discrimination, and worked heavily against the poor and the weak, the humble and the lowly, who have become, when Hinduised, low castes or unclean castes or untouchable castes according to their political, cultural, economic and occupational status. This discriminating assimilation has been going on even in quite modern times, and it has been described in memorable words by Baron Ergon von Eickstedt, the eminent anthropologist and ethnologist of Breslau University who was leader of the Leipzig ethnological expedition to India in 1926-29. Speaking of aborigines like Gonds, Oraons, etc., he writes in his long first chapter contributed to Mr. L. K. A. Iyer's gazetteer of Mysore tribes and castes : " Some of them live as serfs or land workers in areas near to the jungles, and among higher civilised people....Others have already been completely assimilated into the caste system of the Indians. In this way, *they became low-caste, the dregs of humanity, attested by religion and law*," [' Mysore Tribes And Castes,' Vo. I, pp. 25-26. Italics mine.] It is very instructive to note how Hindu ' religion and law,' *i.e.*, Śruti and Smriti, work in the case of the selfsame aboriginal tribe according to the economic and worldly status of its different septs. In his Oxford Pamphlet on ' The Aboriginals,' Mr. Verrier Elwin points out how Hinduised aboriginals like Gandas and Pankas, and other sub-tribes of the great Gond tribe like Pardhans, Ojhas and Nagarchis, " are now regarded as impure,"—while " the aboriginal who retains his independence claims to be a Kshatri. The Meithei have even been admitted as such in the Hindu fold. The Gond Rajas too have succeeded in establishing their claim to recognition. But the poorer folk are unable to do this....Their neighbours at once doom them to inferiority." [P. 26.] The same phenomenon has been recorded in several places in ' The Tribes and Castes of the Central Provinces of India,' by Russell and Hiralal [*e.g.*, Vol. I, pp. 64-65.] About a South Indian tribe Mr. Elwin says : " The Govenment of Cochin put the Kadars into the ' Depressed ' category." [*Op. cit.*, p. 26.] In ancient times, the Pulayas, another Cochin tribe, says Mr. L. K. A. Iyer in his monograph in the ' Ethnological Survey of Cochin,' " had dominion over several parts of the country " ; today when they are quite Hinduised, " in the southern parts of the state they have to stand at a distance of 90 feet

from Brahmans and 64 feet from Nayars,"—as a nearer approach would pollute these holy higher castes. [Quoted in Thurston and Rangachari, ' Castes and Tribes of South India,' Vol. II, pp. 47 and 52.] The Koragas, a wild tribe of South Kanara, were rulers of the land in the far distant past according to tradition ; and, according to a careful study of these once ruling aborigines written in 1885-86 by U. Raghavendrarao, " The Koragas are now the lowest of the slave divisions, and regarded with such intense loathing and hatred that up to quite recent times one section of them, called ' Ande ' or ' Pot ' Koragas, continually wore a pot suspended from their necks into which they were compelled to spit,"—so that they might not pollute the highway used by high caste Hindus. [*Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 428-429.] That exactly was the fate of Mahars also, who are believed to have ruled in, and given the name to, Maharashtra or ' Mahār-rāshṭra ' ; when thoroughly ' Aryanised ' and reduced to the status of Untouchables, they had to carry not only such pots but a thorny bush tied to the waist and left trailnig on the ground so as to efface their polluting footprints,—and these ' Aryan ' insignia continued to be worn in Konkan for several decades even after the fall of the Brahman rule at Poona. During the Peshwa regime, Mahars were allowed to be in Poona only between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. so that their lengthened shadows earlier or later than these fixed hours might not pollute the holy Brahmans in the narrow streets of the Peshwa's ' Aryan ' capital. [G. S. Ghurye, ' Caste and Race in India,' p. 10.]

No wonder Swami Vivekananda said in a despairing outburst : " No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a strain as Hinduism : and *no religion on earth treads upon the necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism.*" [Quoted in *Prabuddha Bhārata*, September, 1943.] That is exactly why I have always felt that the changeless and eternally static ' Sanātana' Hindu ' dharma' is constitutionally—by ' religion and law '—incapable of really absorbing or uplifting the sixty millions of Untouchables, or the thirty millions of poor and weak aborigines, or the theoretically touchable but ' unclean ' castes which also comprise several millions. Untouchability and inherited inequality—(even among the highest castes there is mutual untouchability and inequality)—caste and ' outcaste ', are thus interdependent, and both are inherent in the very nature and constitution of Hinduism as we know it from the most ancient to present times. Exactly like Vivekananda,

but right form the other end of the Hindu scale of human values, the 'Untouchable' Dr. Ambedkar asks with much bitterness but perhaps with unanswerable justice: "Is there any society which has [not only untouchables but also] unshadowables, unapproachables, and unseeables? Is there any society which has got a population of Criminal Tribes? Is there any society in which there exist today primitive people who live in jungles, who do not know even to clothe themselves? How many do they count in numbers?....millions—millions of Untouchables, millions of Criminal Tribes, millions of Primitive Tribes! One wonders whether the Hindu civilisation is civilisation or infamy." [From presidential address at the Ranade anniversary gathering, on 18-1-1943, at Gokhale Hall, Poona, reported in *Bombay Sentinel*, 19-1-1943]. As a dispassionate outsider, I am not prepared—I have no need—to take sides, to condemn or commend; I am only recording facts. And a very remarkable fact in this connection is that what to Dr. Ambedkar is an 'infamy,' is for a Brahman, professedly a refromer too, some thing to glory in. Defending the Hindu religion against a recent attack, this reformer Brahman writes: "Every stage of religion from fetichism upwards is to be found in the body of Hinduism because they (*sic*) have afforded spiritual sustenance or solace to their adherents, and continue to do so." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 3-2-1945.] This placidly complacent appraisal of Hinduism as the unfailing resort of 'spiritual sustenance and solace' for the weary and the heavy laden, coming as it does from a paper devoted to social reform, is sufficient to confirm the suspicion that there can be no real 'uplift' and no future for the Untouchables etc. within the Hindu fold.

In view of this past history of Hinduism and its fundamental doctrine of inequality by birth, its uniquely uniform conservatism impervious to all outside influences,—in view of its peculiar methods of conversion, and of the fact that it has to this day continued to create new unclean and untouchable castes out of poor and weak and helpless aboriginal tribes,-it is futile to hope that the existing Untouchables can or will ever be really 'uplifted' by the caste Hindus, let alone the chimerical hope of their being absorbed and assimilated, as they would be, and are, in Islam or Christianity. Mr. Gandhi very fervently asserts the equality of Brahman or Bania with the Bhangi; but even more fervently he holds by the grand law of nature which requires that the Bhangi shall remain a

scavenger for ever, from generation to generation to the end of all time, in the very problematic hope of having flowers showered down on him by the gods. Of what use will this lip or paper equality, or the shower of divine flowers promised by Mr. Gandhi, be to this and the succeeding generations of Bhangis? And how can the Bhangi be the equal of Brahman or Bania when he is, as von Eickstedt puts it, one of " the dregs of society, attested by religion and law,"—and when Mr. Gandhi believes religiously in the sacrosanctity of this very law which he glorifies as a revealed law of nature ' seen ' by Rishis in their mystic trance visions?

It must be confessed that the Maharashtrians have been comparatively more straightforward in this matter. The Poona organ of the Hindu Mahasabha confessed a few months ago, though dishonestly trying to put the blame on non-Brahmans: " Unfortunately it is a fact that the mentality of the Hindu community generally, and of the non-Brahman society particularly, is not in favour of temple entry." [*Kāḷ*, 15-12-1944.] The same paper published a few weeks later a very revealing letter from a Mahar law student of Poona, describing his hardships in finding board and lodge in Hindu hotels or in hostels attached to the colleges in Poona City. Brushing aside as mere eyewash the farcical 'uplift' gatherings on the last Makar Sankrānt holiday organised by Mr. B. G. Kher, Mr. Jedhe and Mr. N. V. Gadgil, the champion Congress ' uplifters,' the unfortunate student wrote: " In this Poona city in which Messrs. Jedhe and Gadgil live. . . . Untouchables can not get rooms to live in. I was turned out of Lakshmivilās in the Deccan Gymkhana locality when my caste became known. The ' Modern', ' Jayant ' and ' Bādshāhi ' boarding houses flatly refused to give me board when I told them my caste. Even in two hostels of the S. P. College I was refused board last year." In a half-hearted editorial the paper admitted the justice of these bitter complaints, irrelevantly and again rather dishonestly brought in the ' divide and rule ' policy of the British, and concluded lamely: "In the existing circumstances this problem is not so easy as it appears, and it must be confessed that it will not be quickly solved." [*Kāḷ*, 20-1-1945.] How difficult of solution the problem is, becomes patent from the despairing conclusion Mr. N. V. Gadgil, Chairman of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, seems to have arrived at. At one of these ' uplift ' farces Mr. Gadgil said that " untouchability would not disappear unless and until independence was won."

[*Kāḷ*, 15-1-1945.] How very like Mr. Gandhi's new solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem! Far more honest was Dr. Munje's declaration in his presidential address at the Baroda State Hindu Sabha Conference last year. He frankly said that ' democracy ' and ' responsible Government ' were quite new to India, and added, though rather haltingly : " Though we like to have them introduced in the administration of India we must never forget that the largest community in India which is the Hindu community has got a caste system which.....is not very conducive to the western type of democracy." [*Mahratta*, 5-5-1944.] This roundabout admission means in plain words that any talk of real democratic equality in Hindu India is mere moonshine, and that in Hindu Raj the Śūdra and ' Atiśūdra ' (*i.e.*, the Untouchable) will and must always remain what they are and have been since the beginning of time. There is no hope and no future for these weak and lowly and downtrodden peoples in the Hindu polity. Before western Satanism corrupted them, the Śūdra and the Atiśūdra were perfectly resigned to their fate and accepted their position as a divine dispensation; even today there are myriads among the Untouchables who devoutly believe that they would commit a sin if they polluted a Brahman by their touch or near approach, a terrible sin if they entered a temple and polluted the deity by their touch or near approach. But thanks to the Satanic western education, and the ceaseless labours of Christian missionaries, and also the revolutionary ideas preached by renegade Untouchables themselves in the last generation or so, many more myriads among these depressed and downtrodden people have begun to doubt the teachings of Sanātana Hinduism, to abuse them and to revolt against them, and even to abjure the Hindu ' dharma.' And that is the head and front of Dr. Ambedkar's offending ; because he is one of the few who have shown the courage to stand up to the Mahatma and call his sanctimonious bluff, he has been consistently hated and reviled by the Hindu, and particularly the Congress, press.

XIX

PREACHING CONTENTMENT AND CLEANLINESS.

The net result, direct and indirect, of all these twists and turns in the course of our inquiry, and our windings round and into the heart of our main subject, ought to be evident to any thoughtful reader ; it is the inescapable fact that caste and outcaste—caste by birth and its inevitable consequence, the Untouchable—are not mere accidents, mere excrescences, but the bedrock foundation of the entire Hindu socio-religious system and way of life ; these fundamental and religiously held doctrines and their implications have formed the warp and woof of the web of Hindu mass consciousness, —they have been woven into the inmost being of the great Hindu community through countless ages. Untouchability has been a matter of profound religious faith, even for the Untouchables themselves ; they have been taught all along to blame their own 'karma' for it, and to hold not man but the inscrutable decrees of their own evil Fate, their 'Karma' in past lives, responsible for their degradation in this life. It is only quite recently that, to use Mr. Gandhi's memorable words, Western, Satanism has "shaken the foundations of our thought" and our religious faith in this God-ordained law, and some—not all—of the Untouchables have even begun to repudiate it. The idea that 'caste is gone' or 'is going,' or 'must shortly go,' which we find expressed so often and so lightly in politically minded Hindu—and uninformed non-Hindu—circles is mere wishful thinking, or it is an illusion due to sheer ignorance or to the 'slave mentality' created by a century and more of political, cultural and other contacts with the materialistic West ; or else it is a deliberate political pretence intended to disarm alien opinion that baulks at the caste idea, and to soothe and lull the sullen and growing discontent of the gradually increasing numbers of rebellious malcontents among Untouchables themselves who are ceasing to regard their degradation as part of their religion—as a divinely ordained result of their own past Karma, to be borne with submissive resignation.

Those who judge India by what they see superficially in the big cities, especially in the fashionable clubs of Bombay or Calcutta,

Delhi or Simla,—and who judge Indian humanity in the mass from exquisitely groomed and hideously painted bright young club men and women that drown their scanty brains in cocktails,—are apt to conclude that India must be fairly on the way to modernisation, and that the caste idea must be vanishing fast. This is a ridiculous delusion,—a delusion which I must confess to have shared in my salad days when, early in the first decade of this century, we who were young then believed that westernised Aligarh was an unerring pointer to the early and certain ultimate modernisation—on 'all world' lines—of the intellectual elite of India, the future leaders of the nascent Indian nation. Alas for the vanity of youthful delusions! The same Aligarh has now once again become the home of orthodoxy and 'sherwānis' and beards, and of ideas long discarded by Turks and Iranians and Egyptians, and perhaps even by Al Azhar,—the Azhar of Abduh, Tā Hā Husain and other modernists. And even our cocktail drinking and jazzing bright young things shed their borrowed plumes when the annual 'marriage season' comes, and put on their innate caste orthodoxy and tamely submit to caste discipline. As Mr. P. V. Kāṇe, who is not only a 'Mahāmahopādhyāya,' but also M.A., LL.M. of Bombay University, has rightly said in his vast *magnum opus*: "In the cities we may find some people taking their food together, but the real India is in the villages where, in spite of the loud denunciations of reformers for a hundred years, the restrictions on taking food and inter-caste marriages are almost as rigid as they once were"; not only so, but Mr. Kāṇe roundly (and I think again rightly) asserts that "it is not feasible to destroy the caste system in the near future". ['History of Dharma Śāstra,' Vol. II, Part I, p. 22.] With these considered views of a ripe scholar and experienced lawyer may be compared the opinion, scientifically based on statistics and other factual data, expressed in the authoritative Census Report of an important and progressive Indian State, evidently compiled by excellent Hindus: "The ultra-conservative spirit of Hindu priestcraft casts into the far distance the realization of the hope that the lower [*i.e.*, untouchable] castes will become socially equal even with the classes usually termed Śūdras." [Mysore Census Reports—1891 and 1901; quoted in Thurston's 'Castes and Tibes of Southern India,' Vo. II, p. 337]. It may be urged that these reports are fifty and forty years old, that even India cannot have escaped the time spirit, and that the India of today cannot be the India of half a

century ago. But we must not forget that it is in these fifty years that the two most powerful reactionary movements, led by Tilak and Gandhi and helped immensely by the disastrous Khilafatist movement, have most vigorously and successfully defied and resisted the time spirit. In these forty or fifty years the Chinese have, to a man, donned western trousers and shed their long pigtails ; but the Mahatma sedulously grew his short one and doffed his trousers, after his return from South Africa.

The apparent modernisation or westernisation even in our big cities is a passing phase, an illusion—' māyā '—mere appearance and not the reality ; we are still at heart, and at bottom, a highly spiritual people, and our India is verily a land of miracle and mystery, of Masters and Mahatmas. This is the only land on the face of the earth which has a spiritual bank that accepts deposits, not of money, but of spiritual capital in the concrete shape of a mantra—' Aum namah Śivāya '—written out in countless numbers on sheets of paper, and spiritual credit in the shape of oral repetitions of the same mantra carefully counted on the rosary and carefully recorded on paper. The bank has periodically published official reports of the number of mantras thus recorded and received in its treasury, and one of these audited reports published in a leading Congress paper says : "The Mantra Kosha (Treasury) of the ' Aum N. S. Bank' of Benares has received upto date 121 crores of written mantras and 261 crores of rosary repetition records of the mantra." [*Bombay Samachar*, 13-5-1936.] And this vast capital was subscribed within a few months of starting the Bank. It is in present day India that hundreds of educated men and women have seen in broad daylight a Muslim Fakir walk trippingly across the great Brahmaputra river, and beat the ferryboat, too, whose unbelieving booking officer had refused to give him a free ticket. [*Roznāma-i-Khilāfat*, 10-10-1936.] Similarly, hundreds of people have seen a serpent turn into an old man in the great temple at Aleppi and then vanish into thin air after again becoming a serpent. [*Bombay Samachar*, 13-10-1936]. In Sajaula, a suburban village near Simla, a dead woman, placed on her funeral pile, came back to life and before the astonished eyes of hundreds of people again rose in the air, flew up through trees and hills, and disappeared, thus " creating a great sensation,"—quite naturally. [*Bombay Samachar*, 19-9-1936]. Hiralal of Belurghat, having learnt magic in Kamrup, rashly offered to turn into a mugger (crocodile) to convince all scoffers. He gave them two loṭās filled

with magic water; when sprinkled with the water in No. 1 he would become a mugger, and when sprinkled with the specific in No. 2, he would resume his human shape. He did become a mugger with the water in No. 1, but the people were so frightened at this dread metamorphosis that they ran away forgetting everything about specific No. 2, leaving poor Hiralal in his muggery plight. In despair he jumped into the Atreyi river and lived there eagerly awaiting magical rescue; and whenever any one on the bank called out 'Hiralal,' the mugger was so moved as to jump four feet clear out of the water. The latest bulletin in many leading Congress and other papers stated that the unfortunate Hiralal was shot by somebody and that he measured full 20 feet in length from nose to tip of tail. [*Janmabhumi*, 2-9-36, and many other papers.] A holy man, "believed to be an ancient Rishi," appeared on the bank of the Jamna near New Delhi, and "people thronged in vast numbers to make 'darshan' while he ate live snakes, lizards, filth, etc."—nay, the adoring crowds "saw the holy man eating human excreta." [*Bombay Samachar*, 1-8-1936.] This last feat is believed to be a sure sign of divinity, and in the printed life of Upāsani Maharaj, the holy man of Sākori, it is specially mentioned as an important spiritual attainment of the Maharaj who claimed to be "Lord of innumerable millions of universes."

Even in this westernised Mammon-worshipping city of Bombay, a 'Serpent God' appeared at (of all places) a soap factory at Tardeo, and thousands thronged to make 'darshan' and offer milk, incense, etc. to this 'Nāga-deva.' All the leading Indian papers dated 29-9-1936 gave great prominence to this miracle, and several published photographs of the Serpent God. Many miracle workers visit this city and great crowds go to make 'darshan.' Several miracles are attributed to the Mahatma himself, especially by Gujarati Congress papers. 'Mānatās' (vows) are made to him as to a living Deity, and they prove quite fruitful; when thus propitiated he can cure incurable diseases, he can give employment to the unemployed. [*Janmabhumi*, 31-5-1937.] In many places, he has been seen by devotees in wells. Cases of fatal illness in the family of a Kathiawad ruling Prince were with characteristically vindictive and gloating 'Ahimsa' attributed to the fact that the State had "annoyed the Saint." [*Phulchhāb*, 12-12-1941.] A similar fate befalling another Kathiawad Prince and his adviser was similarly attributed by many exultant Congress papers to the public humiliation caused by this

State to the same Saint. And, finally, Mr. Churchill's last grave illness was even more exultantly proclaimed by these Congress papers to be the direct result of the same Saint's internment in August, 1942.

Although most of the supernatural happenings recorded above belong to the year 1936-37, that does not mean that it was an exceptional year, an 'annus mirabilis.' Such happenings are quite in the usual course of events in India. Every now and then gods in temples sweat and weep; the Monkey God Hanuman seems to be particularly subject to such mysterious fits of diaphoretic melancholia, especially in Poona City. Every now and then abnormal children are born,— in the shape of the Elephant-headed God, or as abnormal monsters with teeth full grown who begin to speak as soon as born, and so forth. Only a few weeks ago such a prodigious birth of an infant that instantly grew visibly and did marvellous things at a lying-in hospital in Bombay created such a sensation that special police arrangements had to be made to regulate the crowd of people anxious to make 'darshan.' Every now and then we have 'yajnas' and 'yāgas' (sacrificial sessions) costing thousands and even lakhs of rupees for securing spiritual benefits and supernatural removal of evils like plague, famine, etc. In a Southern Maratha State, ruled by a Brahman Prince, was performed a few years ago a Vedic sacrifice, which entailed the killing of several young goats in a peculiarly non-violent manner: " One Brahman priest held tight the animal's mouth and nostrils, while another rained fisticuffs on its neck and other delicate parts of the body. Now and again it was lifted up and dashed violently on the ground." And this highly spiritual sacrifice was warmly supported in the Marathi press by, among others, " sixteen college professors, twelve doctors, fourteen lawyers, three Sardars and five Śāstris." [*Subodh Patrikā,* 17-2-1935.] The high proportion of highly educated University men in this distinguished company is profoundly significant. Again, we have perennial 'gāyatrīpurascharaṇa' (ceaseless repetitin of the 'gāyatrī' mantra millions of times) and 'Koṭilingārchana' (making and worshipping of ten million mud 'lingas'), in many parts of India. Not only Hindus and Muslims, but also the 'highly educated' yet woefully uncultured Parsis have certainly grown more bigoted and more superstitious in the last fifty years; a living proof of this fact is the rank fetich worship at the holy well of Bhikhābehrām in Churchgate

Street that has sprung up and grown phenomenally only in the last twenty or twenty-five years. Another proof is the fact that only a year or so ago the Parsi press was flooded with solemn declarations made by Parsi M.A.'s and Ph.D.'s of Indian and European Universities that the sacred urine of holy bulls was the very foundation of the Zoroastrian religion. The percentage of superstitious fools and fanatics is perhaps higher in this 'highly-educated' but decidedly shallow-brained community than in any other community in India; and the number of 'highly educated' but utterly unscrupulous humbugs and hypocrites who sedulously encourage this superstition, bigotry and fanaticism is also phenomenally large for so small a community.

In such a profoundly spiritual and religious country, where the caste idea is so deeply rooted and so much in the air as to affect even Parsis and Muslims and Christians, it is futile to expect the Untouchables to be absorbed and assimilated even by the lowest touchable castes, as fondly hoped by Mr. Gandhi. Various remedies are commonly suggested, and vaguely believed to be sufficient, for removing the disabilities of the Untouchables in order to make at least a semblance of democratic self-rule possible. To put the matter bluntly in a nutshell, the only real solution is to give up caste, or else to turn our backs resolutely on democratic self-government. Naturally all our patriotic politicians propose remedies for removing the disabilities of Untouchables that are only intended to bypass this political dilemma posed by the radically anti-democratic caste system. The usual device is to admit the disabilities but to put the blame for them on the Untouchables themselves, alleging that they are hopelessly caste conscious and divided among themselves, that they lack education, and especially that their mode of life and their habits are too filthy to allow their immediate absorption. So they are generously advised to educate themselves, improve their habits and mode of life, trust to time to do its work and trust implicitly in the goodwill of caste Hindus to do the rest—all which, to be candid, does not amount to anything palpable. In fact, to say all this—as our politicians and our press say year in and year out—is to add insult to injury. And it is scarcely honest to say so, too. To take only one aspect of this pose, Mr. Gandhi, as a bigoted Bania, asks them to give up meat and liquor, although, as we have seen, millions of Brahmans are regular meat eaters, and millions of Rajputs, etc., are liquor drinkers

also. Again, Mr. Gandhi, as a bigoted Hindu, asks them to give up beef, although most aborigines are very fond of beef, as noted by Mr. Elwin and others, and yet many of them are quite touchable.

There is every reason to believe that our greatest leaders and reformers have all along been only playing with this grave major problem of Indian politics. Personally, I have always doubted if high caste politicians, and even professed reformers, can even realise the feelings of the awakened Untouchables, when they ask these unfortunates to wait patiently. When in July 1927, Dr. Ambedkar visited the newly built Vaishnava temple at Phanaswadi (Bombay), at the invitation of some responsible persons, he was ignominiously bundled out and the temple thus polluted by him was purified with the holy spiritual disinfectants, cow's dung and urine. And, to add further insult to this injury and insult, the *Indian Social Reformer* loftily preached patience to him and blamed him for trying to hustle the Hindu community, which the paper elegantly compared with an 'obstinate mule.' I quoted then, and I cannot do better than quote again, the apt epigram :

The toad beneath the harrow knows
Exactly where each tooth-point goes;
The butterfly upon the road
Preaches contentment to the toad.

[*Times of India*, 10-8-1927].

Most Brahman and Bania Butterflies, whether social reformers or Congress demagogues, have been doing nothing but preaching contentment to the Untouchable Toad, pointing out his shortcomings and loftily advising him to improve himself. I doubt if they ever try, even in imagination, to put themselves in his place. As the Marathi 'saint' poet Tukārām has said so well, "one can realise (what the toad feels) only if one is born in his race (vamśa)."

Do caste Hindus really want the Untouchables to rise from their present fallen condition, or to be educated, or to improve their standard of living? To take the last item first, in many Indian States, and in British India also, Untouchables are not allowed to use new or laundered clothes. This was a regular rule in the Peshwa regime. In his speech at the International Fellowship dinner, on 15-1-1940, Dr. Ambedkar said that under this rule no Untouchable could buy cloth from a shop unless it was first soiled on the ground and torn a little as a sign of his degradation. To come to our own days, and to Mr. Gandhi's Gujarat, we learn that in a village called

Jhāṇu in South Daskroi Taluka (District Ahmedabd), in March, 1935, copper and brass water vessels were snatched away from Vaṇkar (Dhed) women by Pāṭidārs, *i.e.*, 'Sardar' Patel's fellow castemen, for, "if they were allowed to use them, what difference would there be between them and Pāṭidār women?" [*Gujarat Samachar*, 26-3-1935]. As a rule, caste Hindus do not allow Untouchables to use horses or palanquins for brides or bridegrooms in their marriage processions. The Chamars of Afghana, Dist. Badaun (U.P.), were strictly boycotted by the Mahajan and caste people of the place because a Chamar dared to have an elephant in the procession at his son's wedding. The Chamars were forbidden even to move about in the village, and they had to pass their nights in darkness as no oil was sold to them. [*Hindustan-Prajāmitra*, 7-9-1936.] In Bombay Province, at Nalavadi, Dist. Nasik, the caste people would not allow the Mahars to take a wedding procession through the main thoroughfare. Even the orders of the higher authorities were flouted with the connivance of the local policeman. When higher officials tried to carry out the orders, "caste Hindus lay prostrate across the road through which the procession was to pass." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 19-6-1939].

The humble weddings of these poor people are worth contrasting with the recorded grand weddings of monkeys. A rich Bania of Chapra (Bihar) celebrated the marriage of a monkey in February, 1935. "On the wedding day a grand wedding procession was taken out with bands, horses, elephants, motor cars, etc., led by a dancing troupe of nautch girls....A grand feast was given to those present." [*Mahā-Gujarat*, 2-3-1935]. Of another such monkey marriage celebrated by a Bāwā (holy man) of Surat we read: "Thousands lined the streets to witness the marriage procession of the monkey....followed by a band. The bridegroom wearing a costly costume was seated in a motor car, and by his side was the bride....The Bāwā entertained hundreds of persons at a dinner party." [*Times of India*, 2-4-1936; *Janmabhumi*, 31-3-1936.] Not only are monkey weddings celebrated with such eclat, even the holy Śāligrām stone is married to the holy basil (Tulsi plant) with due pomp and circumstance: "Mr. Ganpat Rai, Honorary Secretary, Hindu Mahasabha, writes: 'In the first week of November, in Aligarh city a Brahmin celebrated the marriage ceremony of his....Śāligrām with the Tulsi plant of a Bania. The ....Sāligrām was carried in a procession accompanied with band and music....The marriage party was en-

tertained to a dinner in which respectable Hindu citizens, title holders, doctors, lawyers, Head Masters, etc. participated." [*Mahratta*, 18-11-1938.] At Ferozepore again, a Brahman's Sāligrām was married to a Tulsi plant belonging to a lady : " A marriage party of about 25 persons, all Brahmans, headed by a band and singing parties, reached the house of the bride where the marriage was celebrated. . . . After the ceremony the bride and bridegroom were placed in a palanquin and carried to the house of the bridegroom." [*Bombay Sentinel*, 14-11-1938.] In fact the marriage of the Tulsi plant is a regular annual function.

The stock argument against the Untouchables is that they are ditty and have unhygienic habits. Although they are very poor and perform some of the dirtiest functions as scavengers, etc., it is generally admitted by those who know that their homes are very neat and clean. As for the hygienic habits of the higher castes including Banias and Brahmans, who cannot plead poverty or ignorance or foul professions as mitigating causes, the conditions in localities inhabited by them in cities like Ahmedabad, Poona, Nasik, etc., are notorious. Perhaps even worse are the conditions prevailing in innumerable district towns and villages. In one of his numerous lectures to such dirty livers, Mr. Gandhi himself has said : " We have no sense of mutual responsibility, with the result that our villages have become dunghills. We are not a shoe wearing people, and yet we so befoul our streets and alleys that any one who cares the least for cleanliness would become unhappy if he had to walk in them unshod. . . . The village pond is used for bathing and washing, and its water is also used for drinking and cooking purposes . . . . Many times buffaloes are seen wallowing in these ponds." [*Harijanbandhu*, 10-2-1935]. And mangy pariah dogs also enter and drink at them. But if Untouchables dare to take water from these filthy ponds, they are soundly thrashed. In 1927, Dr. Ambedkar and his party were furiously attacked by the high caste people of Mahad (near Poona) because he tried to assert his people's right of taking water from the local ' Chowdār ' tank. He and his party were saved from the murderous attack by " the European Collector, European Superintendent of Police, and a Musalman Inspector of Police ; and if the Musalmans of Mahad had not given refuge to untouchable men, women and children, the touchable Hindus would have perpetrated extreme outrages." [*Bahishkrita Bhārat*, translated in *Times of India*, 28-4-1927]. That was eight-

een years ago; and now we read in the leading Congress paper of Bombay how about the end of January, 1945, a little Untouchable girl of about ten was thrashed by the Patel of Viṭā (District Satara) for the crime of drawing water from the village brook. [*Bombay Chronicle*, 1-2-1945.] That is the progress Congress 'uplift' of Untouchables has made in the last twenty-five years. Viṭā is near Karhad, the original home of Mr. Kher.

To return to the unsavoury topic of high caste 'hyegiene', this is what 'Acharya' Kripalani said about the 'poḷs' (streets) of Ahmedabad; "....there is no lack of individual hygiene; but combine us and make us live as neighbours in some 'poḷ' in Ahmedabad, and we will produce dirt and squalor unknown even among uncivilized people elsewhere." [*Young India*, 9-2-1928]. Were it not for the nauseating but invaluable scavenging services rendered by innumerable 'ordure eating' stray cows that infest the streets of the city, walking in these streets with bare feet as the Mahatma says, or even with top boots on as ordinary mortals would think, would prove a sickening adventure. A humourist describing the 'Wonders of Ahmedabad' writes with Swiftian humour: "The Ahmedabad Municipality, devoted as it is to the Gandhian doctrine of Ahimsa, thinks it a terrible sin akin to violence to remove the filth from the 'poḷs.' But another Ahmedabad wonder is to let cows stray at will in order to remove the filth....On red letter days Municipal servants may catch them and take them to the cattle pound; but they release them afterwards for fear of the filth increasing to an intolerable extent if the cows were kept away from poḷs." [*Hindustan-Prajāmitra*, 17-7-1934.] And eleven years later another humourist gives a revolting description of Ahmedabad 'poḷs' which shows that the city maintains its unique reputation to this day. [*Prajābandhu*, 4-3-1945.]

This state of affairs in most Indian cities, towns and villages is due to the indiscriminate exercise of our inalienable ancient right and custom of using public thoroughfares as places of public easement at all hours of day and night. And during epidemics it is the caste Hindus of towns and villages who think it an offence against the Mātā (Goddess), who presides over the epidemic holocaust, to remove accummulated filth, or clean and disinfect houses, wells, etc., or even to shave or bathe. During the plague epidemic in Borsad (Dist. Kheḍa) in 1935, prominent public workers found it very hard to make the people act against this superstition, as the

villagers feared that the Mātā would be angered by any measures of sanitation. At a village called Rangipurā, 'Sardar' Patel said in a speech to the residents: "Why are you such fools? Why do you live like swine?" [*Janmabhumi*, 3-4-1935]. In Paṇḍoli, a big village of 1,500 houses, while even Untouchables were persuaded by a Christian worker to get themselves inoculated, the caste Hindus refused to do so; the only anti-plague measure they adopted was to sacrifice two big goats and a he-buffalo in order to appease the Mātā. [*Navabhārat*, 16-4-1935]. At another big village, Anklāv, the 'Sardar' again addressed the people and said sorrowfully: "Refuse and filth unlimited is lying about all over here. We have all begun to live like animals on dunghills." [*Navabhārat*, 13-4-1935]. At Gambhirā he said to the people: "These villages are not fit for human beings; they are fit for swine to live in....Even in jails they don't keep people in verminous tenements like those here; fleas, rats, bugs, flies, mosquitoes everywhere....Who but brutes can live in such surroundings?" [*Navabhārat*, 12-5-1935]. In passing, one cannot help contrasting the dreadful violence against fleas, rats, bugs, etc., advocated by the 'Sardar' in direct opposition to the weighty 'fatwa' of the Mahatma that turned the scale in favour of plague rats in the famous Ahmedabad Municipality debate recorded above.

So the charge of filthy living and habits, brought against the Untouchables as the main cause of their untouchability, falls to the ground as good touchable castes seem to have scarcely—if at all—higher notions of hygiene and cleanliness than the Untouchables. It may be urged that the conditions described above prevail in villages and among humble agriculturists, etc. But those who inhabit the 'poḷs' of Ahmedabad and other cities and towns are mostly high class, and highly educated, Brahmans and Banias. I could reproduce here hundreds of extracts from Gujarati and Marathi papers describing the gruesome insanitary conditions prevailing in these towns and cities, that would raise the gorge of any decent sinner,—to speak nothing of the state of affairs in holy cities and holy temples, holy rivers and holy ghats. I will give only one epigrammatic description of a Sanskrit college with its hostel, run by two eminent South Indian Brahman Pandits of all India fame, Mahāmahopādhyāya Lakshman Śāstri Draviḍ and his son Rājeśwar Śāstri. In his account of this hostel, Mr. G. T. Māḍkholkar, a well-known Marathi litterateur, writes: "This hostel is quite in keeping

with the general filthiness of Calcutta. It is difficult to decide who creates more filth, the students living in the rooms of the hostel, or the pigeons roosting under its eaves." [*Jyotsnā* (Diwali Number) November, 1937]. I will only add two vignettes of the holy city of Benares. Describing the narrow and filthy lanes of Benares, Mr. V. K. Bhāve wrote : " Such a stench emanates day and night from some of the houses that it is a surprise how people living there remain alive." And he added that " to live in Benares is to live in hell." [*Kesari*, 1-11-1938]. And a Benares correspondent writes seven years later : " Benares, generally a filthy city, is becoming increasignly so, and sometimes it is impossible to go through a lane due to the filth lying there." [*Leader*, 1-4-1945].

Still more remarkable are the conditions under which our highest castes hold their caste dinners, described with a surprising gusto scores and hundreds of times in our books and magazines and newspapers, the instance most famous in Gujarati literature being the description of a great caste dinner of Brahmans in a classic chapter of the humorous classic, ' Bhadrambhadra,' by the late Sir Ramaṇbhai Mahipatrām. I used to regard it as a grossly exaggerated caricature, thinking it impossible for cultured high class Brahmans to sit down to dinner in such unthinkably filthy surroundings. But I saw my mistake when I saw with my own eyes, about thirty years ago, the evil smelling part of a thoroughfare, in the capital of a Kathiawad State, which was pointed out to me as the caste dinner ' hall ' of the highest Gujarati Brahman caste, the caste to which Sir Ramaṇbhai himself belonged. And twenty years later I read in a Surat paper about the ' marriage season ' in that city : " Just now there are thousands of marriages and hundreds of caste dinners in Surat. But it is regrettable that in the last so many years there has been no change in the manner of giving dinners in the streets and in filthy squares . . . . The Municipality ought not to give permission to hold dinners in lanes and alleys full of stinking stagnant pools, cesspools and privies. Why do even high caste educated people prefer to dine in lanes and streets full of stench from cesspools and privies ? " [*Dānḍio*, 27-4-1937.] In an interview given at Surat on 29-7-1936, Mr. Paramanand Kapadia, a leader of ' Young Jains,' said among other things : " I am of opinion that Jains should be sent to jail for six months each in order to teach them lessons of cleanliness. No places are cleaner than jails. . . . I am thoroughly disgusted with the

dirty conditions in which Jain caste dinners are held." [*Bombay Samachar*, 29-9-1936]. And this is what a very popular Gujarati magazine writes: " Our high caste Brahman, after bathing. . . . ard putting on a silk dhoti, can enjoy fine dishes seated in front of a dunghill or a privy or an open gutter. . . . The garb in which our chefs appear in the dining room is such as to annoy and revolt any lover of cleanliness." [*Kumār*, Āshāḍh, 1989 (June-July 1933)]. What is here said in veiled language about the 'garb' of the holy Brahman culinary artist, namely, his single holy silken dhoti, is made quite explicit by a disciple of the Mahatma. Speaking at 'Santram's Mela' held at Nadiad, and defending Untouchables against the charge of uncleanliness, Mr. Narhari Parikh said on 18-2-1935: " But are there not dirty livers, flesh eaters, liquor drinkers among caste Hindus themselves? The 'aboṭiyun' (holy silken dhoti) of our Brahman cooks gives out such a powerful stench that any one whom they pass by feels as if his head would split." [*Bombay Samachar*, 23-1-1935.] For the enlightenment of the uninitiated it must be explained that the holy silken dhoti is a spiritual shield and armour, and also serves, according to high theosophical teaching, as a powerful electromagnetic condenser and dynamo for maintaining the wearer's pure aura at concert pitch; and it is rarely, if ever, washed, lest perhaps it might lose its electromagnetic potency so grossly misrepresented as 'head-splitting' aroma by this semi-materialised disciple of the Mahatma. Be that as it may, it is certain that Mr. Parikh has given a conclusive answer to the indictment of Untouchables on the score of filthy living, and also to his own Master's carping and ill-informed, if honest, criticism of their diet.

XX

'UPLIFT' BY EDUCATION AND LEGISLATION.

Generous Hindus, whether reformist or orthodox, who profess deep sympathy for the Untouchables and much concern for their 'uplift,' regretfully point out another great defect in them which comes in the way of this 'uplift.' Just about a year ago one such sympathetic adviser preached patience to Dr. Ambedkar and wrote in the equally sympathetic *Indian Social Reformer:* "I put it to Dr. Ambedkar, is there complete unity among the various sections of the so-called Untouchables? Is the Mahar prepared to dine and intermarry with the Bhangi?" And, naturally, this poser was reproduced with much satisfaction by the orthodox but equally sympathetic *Mahratta.* [10-3-1944]. We have already touched upon this weakness of the Untouchable castes incidentally; but it is necessary to examine this objection at some length and see if it is a valid, or even quite honest, objection. The natural retort is the apt *tu quoque:* "Are you, highly educated high caste people, united among yourselves? Is the Brahman prepared to dine with, and give his daughter in marriage to a Śūdra—let alone a Mahar or a Bhangi?" But we will put aside this extreme but perfectly legitimate rejoinder as it is likely to ruffle high caste feelings; it will be quite to the purpose, and highly instructive, to investigate how far such 'complete unity' prevails between high castes and sub-castes, or even between sections of the same caste or sub-caste. A significant instance from recent history will not only throw revealing light on high caste 'unity,' it will also shew how caste can intrude into and vitiate 'national' and patriotic politics, besides barring socio-religious intercourse. In his book of Indian reminiscences, Lord Lytton, ex-Governor of Bengal, writes about the then Vice-Chancellor and sole autocrat of the Calcutta University, Sir Ashutosh Mookerji: "Sir Ashutosh was a Brahmin and rigidly orthodox, whereas my Minister of Education was a Kayastha, and the higher caste man would accept no order from one of a lower caste, even though the latter was his official superior in the hierarchy of Government. My Minister was the author of a Bill for the reform of the University. The Vice-Chancellor would have none of it, and my posi-

tion as head both of the Executive Government and of the University [as Chancellor] was rendered very difficult." [' Pundits and Elephants,' p. 175].

To rise from mere education to the higher and more vital socio-religious problem of edibles and common dining, and the still dizzier heights of intermarriage, we have seen how Pandit M. M. Malaviya will not dine even with an ' inferior ' Malaviya Brahman. Coming to our side of the continent, Chitpāvans (Konkaṇasthas) and Deshasthas, the two most dominant sub-castes among the Maharashtra Brahmans, have been contending for supremacy in the socio-religious sphere ever since the former dwarfed and overshadowed politically every other caste or sub-caste in the Deccan by capturing the hereditary post of Peshwa in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. But socially and religiously the Chitpāvans continued to be despised as being of doubtful origin—the grey-eyed and fair-skinned Chitpāvans are even today derided as ' Chitāpāvans ' of Iranian or Phoenician origin—by the indigenous and aristocratic dark-skinned priesthood, especially the Deshasthas ; so much so that the Peshwas had to bribe heavily the priesthood at Nasik, the Deshastha headquarters, in order to secure for themselves the honour of being permitted to dine in the company of Deshastha Brahmans at Nasik. Even today the Deshastha believes himself to be superior to the Chitpāvan, and intermarriage between the two is not common. As a socio-religious periodical argued in a scientific manner : "There seems to be a clear difference between the colours, qualities and natures of Deshasthas and Konkaṇasthas....The idea that by intermarriage among such sub-castes the entire Brahman caste will become one, is also a delusion." [*Hamsa*, 30-5-1935.] Two years later, presiding at the Deshastha Brahman Conference, Mr. N. S. Lokur, then District Judge at Poona, and now Judge of the High Court, pointedly referred with proper pride to the fact that the Brahmans who helped in the foundation of the Maratha Raj after about 1625 A.D., as saints and abbots, statesmen and generals, poets and scholars and priests, were almost all Deshasthas. [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 1-4-1937]. Mr. Lokur was evidently rubbing it in ; for it is undoubtedly a sore point with the Chitpāvans that they have never produced any ' Śankarāchārya ' or saint or saint-poet of note ; the Chitpāvan caste-megalomaniac Vishvanāth Rājwāḍe went to the desperate length of trying to prove that the Deshastha Rāmadās, the guru of Shivaji, was a Chitpāvan ! [Review (by A. M. Joshi,

M.A.) of Khānolkar's Life of Rājwāḍe, in *Pārijāt*, December, 1934.] And both Deshasthas and Chitpāvans simply look down upon the Karhadas.

Among Gujarati Brahmans, the Nāgars claim precedence over all others; and among the six sub-castes of Nāgars again—Vaḍnagarā, Visnagarā, Sāṭhodrā, Prashnora, Krishṇorā, Chitroḍā—the Vaḍnagarās claim the place of honour. And Nāgars of these six sub-castes, even of the highest education, will not dine with one another or intermarry. My late friend Narasimharāo Divaṭia, a distinguished Vaḍnagarā Nāgar poet and critic, scholar and reformer, told me once the story of a fellow-casteman, a staunch Congressman and Khaddar wearer, and M.A., LLB. of the Bombay University, who once said with some asperity about another Vaḍnagarā: "Call him a Vaḍnagarā? Why, he has eaten a Visnagarā's food!", ("Eṇe Visnagarānī rasoi khādhī chhe!") Perhaps the most profoundly read scholar of astonishingly wide culture produced by this highly educated and cultured caste in the last hundred years was the late Professor Ānandashankar B. Dhruva, who was for many years Principal of Benares University, and who was a highly respected friend of both Mr. Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. A man of singular urbanity and personal charm and Arnoldian 'sweetness and light,'—not only a master of all Sanskrit literature, sacred and profane, and of all systems of Indian philosophy and religion, but also a profound scholar of English literature, west-tern philosophy and Christian theology,—he was all his life a strict observer of caste rules and never ate food cooked by any but a Vaḍnagarā Brahman. What is still more remarkable, only four or five years ago he expressed displeasure and disgust that persons of other sub-castes should have been allowed to dine at certain Vaḍnagarā caste dinners. [Ānandashankar Dhruva Memorial Volume (Gujarati), p. 54.] A striking feature of the appreciations contained in this volume, published late in 1944, is that writer after writer, all highly educated men and women, referred with profound admiration and respect to his strong caste feelings and strict orthodoxy in the matter of food, clothes, etc. And among Vaḍnagarās themselves, the 'Grihastha' class, who have since long given up the profession of priesthood, hold themselves aloof from the 'Vaidika' class who have continued to officiate as priests; and intermarriages between these two classes of the identical sub-caste are not yet quite common.

The Nāgar and other Gujarati Brahmans, as well as the Deshastha, Konkaṇastha and other Maharashtra Brahmans, belong to one of the two great regional sub-divisions of Indian Brahmans, the Southern or 'Pancha-Draviḍa' ('Five Dravidian' clans) division. But among Marathi speaking Brahmans there are two sub-castes which come under the second great sub-division, the Northern or 'Pancha-Gauḍa' ('Five Gaud' clans). These are the Sāraswats (who call themselves 'Gauḍa Sāraswata'), a caste remarkable for a long tradition of Sanskrit and western learning and high public service under the Maratha and British empires; and the Kuḍāl-deshastha Gauds (who call themselves 'Ādya Gauḍa'), comparatively a quite backward caste in the matter of education, wealth and social position. More than a generation ago strenuous attempts were made to unite these two sub-castes, common conferences were planned, and for a time it looked as if they would achieve a miracle in the whole history of Indian castes and amalgamate into one homogeneous endogamous body. But the comparatively obscure Gauds have stoutly refused to be amalgamated, or even to have any social intercourse, with the Sāraswats who have the honour of producing in the last three or four generations such eminent scholars and jurists as Bhandarkar and Telang and Chandavarkar, to mention only a few. The attempt at amalgamation ended in fiercely vituperative pamphleteering and savagely embittered and frayed tempers, making the initial attempts at fraternisation of three or four decades ago perfectly impossible in future. This unique experiment in the history of castes proves the truth of the dictum of the *Hamsa* that it is a delusion to expect sub-castes to unite, and of the shrewd aphorisms 'castes grow by fission' and 'once a caste always a caste.' As 'Acharya' Kripalani has rightly said in a lecture with the apt caption 'The Genius of India': "The four castes have increased to four thousand. A caste once created has never disappeared." [Quoted in 'Indian Culture' (Calcutta University Lectures), by H. N. Datta, pp. 20-22].

This fissiparous tendency inherent in caste as such is aptly illustrated by the 'goḷs' ('circles,' *i.e.*, groups of contiguous villages) and 'ekḍās' ('unions') into which an otherwise homogeneous caste is often seen to split up. And these new units cease to intermarry for no apparent sane or rational cause. The great Pāṭidār caste of Gujarat, to which 'Sardar' Patel belongs, is only a Śūdra caste of

Kunbi agriculturists; but it was convulsed a few years ago because a Pāṭidār girl of Karamsad, the centre of an 'aristocratic' 'goḷ,' was given in marriage to a boy of Virsad, the centre of a plebeian 'goḷ.' Feelings ran high, huge meetings of protest were held, and the concentrated fury of the aristocratic 'goḷ' was distilled into the biting dictum, "Should a Pāṭidār of Karamsad *give* his daughter to a Pāṭidār of a place like Virsad, when even a Dhed of Karamsad will not *take* the daughter of a Dhed of Virsad?" It is scarcely necessary to stress incidentally the unspeakable contempt for the untouchable Dhed, as the lowest of human beings, implied in this dictum. It may be added in passing that this narrowing of the marriage circle is further aggravated by Pāṭidārs of the same 'goḷ' or village being further divided into 'kulin' (high family) and 'akulin' (low family). [*Pāṭidār*, Shrāvan, 1992 (July-August, 1936).]

That this fissiparous sub-caste consciousness is actually growing is admitted on all hands. In a discussion at Poona on the desirability or otherwise of having and encouraging caste and sub-caste institutions, Mr. S. L. Karandikar, M.A., LL.B., then editor of a Nationalist daily and later M.L.A., stoutly advocated such institutions and said: "For the last fifteen or sixteen years Mr. Gandhi has been carrying on a national movement. Why have caste institutions become more rampant during this period? . . . . I think that caste institutions should not disappear for they are useful" Mr. Agarwal, B.A. (Oxon.), Bar-at-law, who admitted he was himself a member of the Agarwal Mahasabha, added with delightful inconsequence and conservatism, imbibed perhaps in the 'home of lost causes': "The easy way to removal of untouchability, proclaimed by Mahatma Gandhi, is to foster caste feeling." [*Dnyān Prakāsh*, 17-4-1936.]

I do not think it is necessary to carry further this examination of the hollow high caste pretence that untouchability practised by the caste Hindus is somehow excused by the disunity and untouchability prevalent among Untouchables themselves. As R. R. Marett, the distinguished sociologist of Oxford, says in his introduction to Mr. L. K. A. Iyer's gazetteer of Mysore tribes and castes: "To judge by what these pages suggest, any mitigation of caste exclusiveness that is likely to occur will not be caused by 'revolution from below.' The humblest communion of them all, little better it may be than a gang of thieves and beggars, is no less self-centred

than the highest, and is all the more prone to a rigid conservatism because private reflection and public discussion are equally foreign to its habits." [' Mysore Tribes and Castes,' Vol. I, Introd. I, pp. lii-liii.] And is any ' revolution from above ' any more likely to occur ? What results have ' private reflection ' and ' public discussion ,' going on in plenty for the last hundred years and more in the highest and best educated castes, produced so far ? Caste ' exclusiveness ' has not at all been ' mitigated ' in reality. And that is not the only point. It must not be forgotten that it is the higher castes that pass this intense caste consciousness down to the lower ones ; it is they who set the example ; it is they who are responsible for the ' rigid conservatism ' of the lowest castes. It naturally becomes a passion with the lower castes to imitate their betters, to appear higher than some still lower than themselves and to guard their highly prized caste superiority even more jealously than those do whose high caste status in the Hindu world is almost self-evident.

Finally, there remains the drastic remedy of removing untouchability by means of compulsory universal education and, specially, legislation. A highly educated ' England returned ' Brahman friend, fairly high up in the I.C.S., very confidently assured me about a year ago that the problem can be easily solved by educating the masses and making untouchability illegal. Can it, indeed ? I had this illusion once, but I lost it years ago ; what I have seen happening in the last forty years and more, and what I see happening even today, should suffice to disillusion even the most optimistic philosopher. Education has not ' mitigated ' the ' caste exclusiveness' of the highest castes. As for education of the ' Harijans,' even when the much boomed ' Harijan uplift ' was in full swing, and the maudlin sentiment created by it was in full spate, practically the whole of touchable Gujarat directly or indirectly opposed the entry of untouchable children into public elementary schools, as confessed by followers of the Mahatma himself ; Untouchables were so intimidated, as we have already seen, that they dared not send their children to school. For economic reasons also the very poor, whether untouchable or touchable, evade compulsory education ; and in this evasion they are willingly helped by school masters of higher castes, as we shall see later on.

As for the heroic remedy of removing untouchability by law, I must repeat that all such social reform legislation is bound to fail

so long as the conscience of the caste people remains unmoved, and so long as they are religiously averse at heart to the reform aimed at. And let us not forget that 'social reform' has quite a different meaning in India from what it bears in the west; here all social customs are based on religious beliefs,—as we are so often told they are all 'sacramental' at bottom. How can a merely secular law eradicate notions that have been devoutly held through thousands of years as part and parcel of the religious faith of the entire community? Referring to the 'distressing complexity' of the problem of caste, the eminent French orientalist, Sylvain Levi, writes in his introduction to the Mysore gazetteer of castes: "We have there a system of facts which seems absolutely impossible of bringing within the limit....within which the tradition of Roman Law has accustomed us to class social phenomena." ['Mysore Tribes and Castes,' Vol. I, Introd. II, p. lxix.] Hinduism thus being a socio-religious system, unique and *sui generis*, based on sacred scriptural authority, it has so far defied attempts at legislative reform; all social legislation aimed at reforming abuses—abuses according to non-Hindus—seems to have failed so far. The act of Sati was made a crime by law more than a hundred years ago; and yet, as we have seen, the Sati ideal is passionately and reverently held in high esteem to this day by Hindus of the highest education. Professor P.T. S. Iyengar has rightly said: "The past dwells very much in the present in India, where the spirit of conservatism has a powerful hold on the minds of the people." ['Advanced History of India,' p. 24.] And this very 'spirit of conservatism' is the spirit of Hinduism.

In his broadcast on the Draft Hindu Code, which is intended to remove some of the disabilities of women under the Hindu law of the Smritis, Mr.T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, C.I.E., former Law Member and Advocate General of Madras, has reported the following words addressed to him by an orthodox Sanatanist opponent of the Code: "What is the result of all your legislation?....How many widows have married? How many civil marriages have been performed? How many excluded Hindus have entered the temples? Will not a similar fate overtake the Code?" [*Sunday Observer*, 28-1-1945.] Despite the brave show of optimism by a few reformers like Mr. T. R. V Sastri, these triumphant queries are unanswerable as revealing this true spirit of unchanging, 'sanātana,' Hinduism; they constitute a standing challenge to all reformists, as they are based on undeniable facts. And they show

that the Hindu conscience in the mass practically remains what it was before the advent of the British. About the Sarda Act, aimed against child marriage, Mr. P. P. Patwari, Advocate, social worker of Ahmedabad, said only the other day in his evidence before the Hindu Law Reform Committee that is considering the Draft Code: " There was a tendency among large sections of the people to regard the law as 'scrap.' In many cases the fine was regarded as a marriage expense and a certain sum was previously set apart for payment of fine." [*Times of India*, 7-2-1945.] And it is specially worthy of note that the orthodox opposition to the Code is gradually gaining strength day by day; and, what is still more worthy of note, prominent Congressmen and even once shining lights of Liberalism like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad are up in arms against the Code. They do not want the joint family to go, they do not want civil marriage, they do not want 'pratiloma' marriages (*i. e.*, lower caste men marrying higher caste women), they do not want the Sati ideal to be lowered. As Mr. Safai, B.A., LL.B., Senior Advocate, Federal Court, and Secretary to a Brahman Sabha, said before the Committee at Poona: " In fact there is no force of public demand behind it [the Draft Code]......The Committee has under the cloak of permissive legislation, given full freedom to every Hindu of mixed marriage." [By 'mixed marriage' is meant here, not marriage of Hindu and non-Hindu, but only intermarriage among the various castes.] " This is a deliberate attempt to destroy the age long principle of caste heredity....The ideal of marriage amongst the.... three higher Varnas (castes) is laid down by Manu as follows: 'upacharyah striyā sādhvyā satatam devavat patih' ['chaste women ought always to serve and worship the husband like God']. Hindu women have followed this tradition of 'sati-dharma'.... The Committee....desires the State to give women a sort of anti-social license." [*Mahratta*, 16-2-1945.] And Mr. K. M. Munshi, reformer and man of letters and ex-Congress Minister, and what not, has opposed the Code almost on these very lines. It is significant that the orthodox *Mahratta* says that " the present Committee seems to be one-sided," and it supports the suggestion made by the orthodox opponents of the Code that it should include lawyers like Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Mr. Munshi! [*Mahratta*, 23-2-1945.] At Allahabad, the Committee was 'received' by an influential Hindu deputation

of Bengal, and the Bengal and Assam Lawyers' Association, have also strongly opposed the Code. [*Times of India*, 1-3-1945]. "A black flag demonstration by thousands of Hindus, including women, was staged at the Amritsar railway station, when members of the Rau Committee on the draft Hindu Code passed through.... ....The members of the Hindu Law Code Committee, who arrived in Lahore this morning, were greeted with black flags at the railway station by about 200 Hindus, including women....'We stand for uniformity of some sort of legislation for the Hindus'...., observed Rai Bahadur Badridass, Malik Jeewanlal Kapur and Sardar Harnam Singh, advocates, when they were examined on Saturday as representatives of the High Court Bar Association by the Hindu Code Committee. They added: 'We are generally opposed to the Code' ...." [*Times of India*, 20-3-1945.] Nothing could more aptly and appropriately illustrate and support my whole thesis than these facts and the profounsdy interesting statements that have been made before the Hindu Law Reform Committee in the last few weeks. And the cry is still they come.

What can more education and special legislation for 'Harijan uplift' achieve in such an atmosphere of static conservatism and orthodoxy? And, what is even more to the point, such legislation has already been tried, and seems to have failed. In the progressive Baroda State, compulsory primary education has been in force for about forty years now; but it has been known for years past that the law is evaded and fines are willingly paid. And what education has done to enlighten the caste Hindu citizens of even important towns in the State, will become evident from what happened at Kalol, a town of 18,000 souls, where cholera played havoc in December, 1941. The Goddess of Cholera possessed many persons and through them commanded the public not to carry out the measures suggested by the State Health Department. The Mātā said: "None must shave, or sweep their houses, or remove any filth, or get inoculated. I will destroy those who disobey my commands." Among those thus possessed were many men who put on bangles and saris so as to be fit vehicles for possession by the Mother Goddess. [*Bombay Samachar*, 11-12-1941.] And those thus possessed were not Untouchables, but good caste Hindus.

This was after more than a generation of compulsory education. Naturally the Law against Untouchability has been practically a

show how the Untouchables have been 'uplifted' in the Baroda State under the fostering care of such a zealous reformer and practical 'uplifter' as the late Maharaja Sayajirao. A Kathiawad Congress paper described how, in spite of the Maharaja's deep sympathy for Antyajas, his officers in Amreli Division carried out their 'uplift': "The order to admit Antyaja boys into schools remains merely on paper. In 95% of schools the boys are made to sit outside in the cold, heat or rain." [*Saurāshṭra*, 18-2-1928]. Mehsana is the headquarters of one of the four Divisions of the State. A writer in Mr. Gandhi's paper complained a few years ago that the high caste teachers in the primary schools at Mehsana evaded the compulsory education law by incontinently sending away every child of the sweeper class as soon as it reached the maximum age for compulsion. [*Harijanbandhu*, 10-3-1940]. Mr. Parikshitlal Majmudar, Secretary, All-Gujarat Harijan Sevak Sangh, Sabarmati, reported that he was beaten with shoes and sticks at Nāni Naroli (under Baroda), by order of the local Police Constable, for first drinking water—of right as a caste Hindu—from a 'parab' (public water pot) kept by a Bhil, and then going to the location of Untouchables. [*Bombay Samachar*, 4-5-1934, and other papers]. In August, 1935, the 'Harijans' of Piploi, Taluka Bhādran (under Baroda), appealed to the Darbar against oppression by local Pāṭidārs because they, the Harijans, had been refusing to take away and dispose of the dead animals of the Pāṭidārs. Their daily supplies were cut off, their huts were stoned at night, kerosene and shrubs exuding noxious juices were thrown into their well, and they were threatened with violence and murder. They said that in spite of 'sympathetic' action by the Mahalkari (Taluka officer) and the Suba (executive head of the Division), this persecution had gone on for two years and was becoming unbearable; and recently their mango trees had been cut down, valuable sesamum crops had been destroyed and threats of burning down their houses had been given to them. [*Bombay Samachar*, 8-8-1935]. On 18th May, 1936, an outlaw 'died', while out cattle-lifting, at Nandāsan in Kaḍi Taluka (under Baroda). The elders of the Vankar Dhed community were called to the Choro (chāvḍi) and asked to carry the corpse. One of them, Khushāldās Premābhai, ventured to grumble: "Is this corpse bearing also part of 'veṭh' (forced labour)?" Thereupon,—"The Faujdar lost his temper, gave Khushāldās foul abuse and two slaps and said: 'Who are you to ask such a question? Are

you a lawyer?' The Faujdar then locked him up in the Choro and began to fist him, saying, 'Ḍheḍo phāṭi gayo chhe' ('the Dhed has become insolent').. Seeing that Khushāl was wearing a janoi (sacred thread) the Faujdar ordered, 'break his janoi', —and it was broken." [*Janmabhumi*, 22-5-1936]. On 12th December 1937, Lallu Rāmā, 'Harijan' veṭhio (Untouchable whose turn it was for forced labour) of Parthān, Taluka Navsāri (under Baroda), was severely thrashed in the Choro by the Anāvlā Brahman headman of the village and several other Anāvlās, because he had dared to protest against being foully abused by the headman. In his statement, taken by Mr. Nāgjibhai Arya, Harijan leader and member of the Baroda Legislative Assembly, Lallu said: "My father came into the 'choro' and fell at their feet and wept, and prayed to them to let me go. They all said: 'We won't let him go unless he falls at the feet of the headman seven times and rubs his nose on the headman's shoe seven times." Lallu was graciously let off when he performed this richly deserved penance for insolence. [*Bombay Samachar*, 27-12-1937].

That is what anti-untouchability legislation in the progressive State of Baroda has achieved by way of 'Harijan uplift,' a full generation after the removal of untouchability by law, and after about forty years of compulsory education. Dr. Ambedkar himself was at one time a member of the Baroda Civil Service; he had been selected by the Maharaja himself, who had also ordered that he should be given a special reception on his arrival at Baroda. Not only was the order ignored by the high caste bureaucracy, but on his arrival at the capital Dr. Ambedkar could find no place to live in; no one in the city was willing to have him as a tenant, no hotel was inclined to give him living room. With great difficulty he found temporary quarters in the Parsi 'dharamshala.' He was made to feel his untouchability in the office too, where the clerks working at their little desks seated on the carpet would carefully pull up the carpet whenever he passed, so that it might not be polluted by his touch. Even the peons would throw files and papers on his table from a distance to avoid pollution. Finally he was compelled to leave even the Parsi 'dharamshala' and to bid good-bye to the progressive State that had removed untouchability by law. [*Vividha Vritta*, 30-10-1939].

This happened many years ago, but Dr. Ambedkar's untouchability has not left him When he was a professor at the Bombay

College of Commerce, certain Gujarati professors objected to his drinking water from the professors' water pot And even now when he is a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council his untouchability does not leave him. On 3rd January, 1945, when he had gone on an official tour to Calcutta, Mr. G. D. Jadhav, B.A., LL.B., Railway Conciliation Officer, invited him to dinner. Next morning, the cook and another servant of Mr. Jadhav flatly refused to serve at his place any more, and when asked the reason why, they indignantly said: "You dined last night with a sweeper" And it is not cooks and servants alone who feel and show such hatred and contempt; any one who has read the bitterly vituperative attacks on Dr. Ambedkar for his criticism of the Vedas and Gita, knows how this feeling of contempt and hatred is shared by Hindu editors of the highest education and culture. Infuriated by his attacks on the Vedas and Gita, the *Gujarati* has called him 'ornament of the clan of Ḍheḍs,' and used the term 'Ḍheḍ' in the article five times in such an insulting manner as to reveal boundless inherited venom against such despised castes. [*Gujarati*, 10-12-1944]. The Congress paper of Kathiawad has done exactly the same thing with even greater fury; through nearly three columns of jibes against the Doctor's caste, overflowing with concentrated hatred and loathing for the 'Ḍheḍ,' it has revelled in words like 'Ḍheḍistān,' 'Ḍheḍwāḍo,' 'Ḍheḍ-Bhangi,' etc., which reveal the real 'inner voice' of Hinduism in general and Congress Hinduism in particular. [*Phulchhāb*, 13-10-1944].

XXI

A MAJOR POLITICAL PROBLEM.

Along with 'Hindu-Muslim unity' and 'use of khaddar,' 'removal of untouchability' used to be one of the main planks of Mr. Gandhi's original political platform. But gradually and almost imperceptibly this plank dropped out after Mr. Gandhi's fast against Dr. Ambedkar, in 1932, proved successful in depriving the Untouchables of the right of separate representation won by them at the Round Table Conference in 1931 In fact latterly untouchability has entirely ceased to be a political problem for Mr. Gandhi. In his letter to Dr. Ambedkar, dated 6th August, 1944, he writes, in a not very convincing manner: "The Hindu-Muslim question is for me a lifelong question. There was a time when I used to think that when this question is solved India's political problem would be over. Experience has taught me that it was only partly true. I began to abhor untouchability when I was in my teens, but it was a question with me of religious and social reform, and though it has attained great political importance its religious and social value is for me much greater." [*Times of India*, 8-1-1945]. In his memorable presidential address on cow protection at Belgaum, delivered on 28th December, 1924, Mr. Gandhi said at the outset: "I believe that just as without being freed from the sin of untouchability, without achieving Hindu-Muslim unity, and without becoming khadi-wearers we cannot win Swaraj, similarly," etc., etc. ['Gosevā,' p. 15]. Thus removal of untouchability was not only a 'plank,' it was the very first 'plank' in Mr. Ganhi's political platform in those days; but now, twenty years later, he says that for him it is and has always been more a matter of social and religious reform, and that it has somehow "attained great political importance," evidently without his knowledge and approval. And, equally evidently, just as the really political and far more important problem of Hindu-Muslim unity will solve itself as soon as the British 'quit India,' this problem of mere social and religious reform will solve itself even more quickly and easily when the British go away. Naturally this surprisingly barefaced change of front, only implied by Mr. Gandhi, has been adopted unblushingly by leading 'Harijan uplifters' also. The

President of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, Mr. N. V. Gāḍgil, has actually done so, without mincing matters, quite recently. Presiding at the Untouchability Removal Day celebration at the Māng colony at Poona, on 14-1-1945, Mr. Gāḍgil roundly declared that "untouchability would not be removed until independence was won." [*Kāḷ*, 15-1-1945]. Thus not only has the Congress show of 'Harijan uplift' admittedly proved a dismal failure, the problem of untouchability has ceased to be regarded by the Congress as a matter of any political importance.

In a painfully laboured leading article which unsuccessfully tries to gloss over this failure and apathy of the Congress 'uplifters' and the public, the leading Congress paper of Bombay has once again confessed how the "anti-untouchability pledge" taken by the citizens of Bombay at a "huge public meeting" in 1932, when Mr. Gandhi was threatening to commit suicide to coerce Dr. Ambedkar, "has been honoured,"—which in plain language means "dishonoured"—and writes rather imbecilely: "Let the people in Bombay in particular remind themselves of their pledge taken twelve years ago." [*Bombahy Chronicle*, 24-2-1945]. And I should not be surprised if twelve years hence the paper has again to 'remind' the Bombay public of this 'pledge'; perhaps it may become a duodecennial 'pledge day,' like so many of our speech making, slogan shouting, flag saluting 'days' that are so soul satisfying in spite of their practical uselessness and inanity. And even taking the most heroically optimistic view and supposing that a real miracle happens in Bombay city and all temples and holy tanks like those at Bhuleshwar and Bāṇgaṅgā, all Hindu hotels and restaurants, all Hindu homes and Brahman and other Sabhas, are really thrown open to all 'Harijans' down to the Bhangis, can any optimist honestly believe that the same miracle will happen in the villages too? The very next day after the *Bombay Chronicle* wrote its tepid and unconvincing leading article, a Poona paper reproduced from the February number of the *Dalita Sevak* magazine, the following item of typical 'Harijan Uplift' in the districts: "Sākūr, Malegaon Taluka, (Nasik District): The Mahars here have been boycotted in connection with the land question. The Mahars had been made to give in writing that they did not want any lands. But the Mahars informed the officials that they did not agree to what they had given in writing. This has made the boycott permanent, and it has gone to the extent of refusal on the part

of traders to sell necessaries to the Mahars." [*Sakāḷ*, 25-2-1945]. This is a typical instance of what the Untouchables have to contend against, even if the law be on their side; as very small and weak and poverty-stricken minorities, divided among themselves again, scattered through hundreds of thousands of villages, their very existence is made impossible if they try to have their own way, or to stand on their rights, in opposition to the caste Hindus. The correspondent who reported in the columns of the *Bombay Chronicle* the assault on a little Untouchable girl for drawing water from the village brook at Viṭā (recorded above in Section XIX), very innocently asked the child's mother: "Why don't you complain to the Mamlatdar?" She said: "Sir, we have to live in the same village." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 1-2-1945]. The poor woman's simple but tragically significant reply is a sufficient answer to those who believe, or pretend to believe, that untouchability can be removed by resorting to the law or by legislation. I doubt if such legislation would prove successful even if non-Hindus formed a majority among the officials in the districts; but with caste Hindus actually constituting a vast majority of the officials, especially in the lower grades, such legislation is bound to fail,—as we have seen it fail in the progressive Baroda State.

And these weaknesses of the Untouchables—their grinding poverty and economic helplessness, their ignorance and caste-conscious disunity, their inferiority complex inherited through a hundred generations of religiously believed and practised self-abasement, and their hopeless minority in district or taluka, town or village,—make it impossible for these sixty millions of suppressed humanity scattered all over this vast sub-continent to form a united self-contained and self-supporting community capable of safeguarding their common interests and enforcing their legal and civic rights,—let alone militantly asserting them like the Sikhs who, though numbering only about a tenth of the Untouchables, have martial traditions of high political ambitions, have several ruling Chiefs, are fairly educated and wealthy, and are compactly settled in a few districts of the Punjab Province. It was, therefore, surprising to learn that in an interview broadcast to North America from London, on 4-2-1944, Mr. R. R. Bhole, M.L.A., Advocate, of Poona, and a prominent representative of Untouchables in the Deccan, had said on behalf of his Independent Labour Party: "We do not hope for an end of the caste system at all, but we pro-

pose that Untouchables, instead of forming outcast minorities in the Hindu villages, should make their own separate democratic communities." [*Times of India*, 5-2-1944]. When Mr. Bhole said so he must have been talking not only on but also in the air. If we face facts as they are and remember all the weaknesses of the Untouchables detailed above, and add further their almost total absence in the public services, legislatures and institutions of local self-government, it is not possible even to dream of any such 'democratic communities.' Where are these 'democratic communities' to be located, evidently isolated from caste Hindus and others? And how many water-tight cross sections would each of the innumerable 'democratic' locations be divided into? Taking only the Chamars who claim to be higher than all other Untouchables in Maharashtra,—and who are probably best off in the matter of worldly goods also,—the Haralā, the Rohidās, the Cheula, the Dābhoḷā and the Kaṭai Chamars do not intermarry and do not eat one with the other. With such economic, social, educational handicaps, with such impassable crippling caste barriers, and with such depressing superstitions to contend against, is it even sensible to talk of 'democratic communities' of Untouchables? Even the ninety millions of Muslims, with majorities in several provinces, with a great University of their own, with several powerful ruling Princes, and many big zamindars and merchants, and with traditions of centuries of imperial rule in India, have, with all their resources, been put on the defensive by the clamant caste Hindu majority. What chance have the Untouchables, with all their too patent weaknesses and handicaps in every sphere of life and every field of activity, of standing on their own legs as 'democratic communities' in the fierce struggle for political power that is bound to become keener and fiercer as more and more power comes into the hands of Indians, as it is bound to come in the near future?

What then should the Untouchables do? This is the problem before all earnest and thoughtful Indians who really care for the country and its future, and who, keeping aloof from the exciting and corrupting game of politics, take broader and longer views not taken by—generally not possible to be taken by—even well-meaning men tied down to party or community and swayed by political, racial or communal bias. For it is unthinkable, it would amount to insanity to think, that so many as sixty millions of Indians can any more continue to be treated with impunity as in many respects

lower than animals. Rabindranath Tagore has said in burning words that "it is beyond the power of any man, it is opposed to the divine law of the universe, to establish the Swaraj of such a caste ridden, isolated, internally torn sect over a vast continent like India." Even if we regard this as merely a poet's frenzied rhetoric it is certainly worth inquiring and pondering whether a country can win, or keep when won, or can even claim, independence, when it has—over and above the communal problem, and over and above the problem of more than three thousand Hindu castes that do not intermarry or break bread together—sixty millions of Untouchables and Unapproachables and Unseeables, thirty millions of hopelessly primitive aboriginals, and about ten millions more of human beings eternally branded as criminal or unclean castes. As I have said long ago, we can, as the homely adage goes, either eat our cake or keep it ; we cannot eat it and keep it too. If caste by birth with religiously held ideas of high and low by birth is the negation of democracy, we cannot have caste and outcaste and also democratic institutions.

I have quoted the opinions of several Indian thinkers, scholars and historians on this subject of basic importance ; all have regretfully but candidly agreed that the caste system has kept India from becoming a nation and left it a helpless prey to foreign invaders through at least twenty-five centuries. I shall quote only two more. Dr. Satchidānanda Sinha, who has held very high offices and has been Vice-Chancellor of at least one Indian University, said in his presidential address at the 35th All India Kayastha Conference that he saw "nothing inherently objectionable in a nationalist identifying himself with a caste movement," and yet was constrained to add later on: "But every dispassionate student of history and sociology will have to admit that the social system inherited by us from our forefathers has, on the whole, not been quite successful. For one thing it has not succeeded in enabling our people to resist successfully foreign invasions and aggressions ....The result....has been that for centuries and centuries we have lived under foreign domination." ['Speeches and Writings of S. Sinha,' pp. 734-736]. And later on he quoted with telling effect the following passage from Pandit Motilal Nehru's address as president of the Congress session held in 1928 : "While, however, the Government has to answer for a great deal, it must be frankly confessed that we cannot honestly acquit ourselves of all blame for

our present plight. The Government certainly is not to blame for evils of our own social system." [*Ibid.*, p. 745]. This incidentally exposes the hollowness of the new plea that untouchability will go when the British go.

The second passage I quote, with a running commentary, is from a long front page review of Mr.S. Natarajan's Oxford pamphlet on 'Social Problems,' in the leading Congress paper of Delhi, edited by Mr. Devadas Gandhi, the Mahatma's son. The reviewer writes : "In spite of the devoted work of reformers for over a century, we are today nowhere near the solution of our social problems....The outstanding feature of society as it is organized in India is the caste system and its excrescence, untouchability...." [Why 'excrescence'? The Untouchable, the outcaste, is rather the logical consequence of caste]. "From professional groups birth has today become the hall-mark of caste" [—why 'today'? Caste by birth is at least as old as the oldest Upanishads, and is almost certainly traceable even to the Rigveda,—] "and there are many who believe that to revert to the original classification of the priestly, warrior, commercial and labouring classes will be to maintain its utility even under modern conditions...." [This is a modest understatement ; the modern champion of the 'four-caste' system, Mr. Devadas Gandhi's revered father, has emphatically declared that the whole modern world must adopt this divinely ordained system if it is to be saved from utter ruin. Next follows some regulation claptrap about the so-called removal of untouchability, and vague talk about the 'disruption' of castes by new economic forces.] "This disruptive influence has spread from the towns outwards to our villages and its final extinction, in spirit if not in form, cannot long be postponed"....[This is an instance of the usual tendency to reassure ourselves by self-deceiving phrases, gestures and slogans. As Mr. Kāṇe has rightly said, what we see in cities is not the real India. And if the very 'spirit' of caste were to become extinct, why should the mere 'form' remain? The truth, as shown by Mr. Kāṇe, is just the other way about : what we see in cities is mere 'form,' mere appearance, while the 'spirit' of caste remains as alive as ever. Anyhow the reviewer is compelled to admit later on that 'caste consciousness' has invaded our politics also]. "How far is this caste consciousness in politics a transient feature in our national life, bound to disappear with the disappearance of the caste system as such,—or, how far is the feel-

ing of caste too deep-rooted in our nature for us to be ever able to outgrow its limitations into the realisation of our common national life? Caste undoubtedly is the very negation of democracy because it imposes a division based not on merit or even wealth—conditions which can be changed—but on birth. If democracy is government of the people, by the people, for the people,....how far is such a system capable of successful working in conditions which posit a negation of human equality?" [These are courageous admissions, and legitimate questions which demand the inevitable and even more courageous answer. But, as usual, the reviewer runs away from the true solution and concludes very illogically, if not dishonestly:] "The ultimate extinction of caste will undoubtedly solve the problem of the introductin of democratic institutions so far as Hinduism is concerned," [—undoubtedly it will; but when is this happy 'extinction' going to take place? Is it even within sight, or within measurable distance?—] "but the abolition of caste by itself will not do much to remove the distinction between Hindu and Muslim in politics." [*Hindustan Times Weekly*, 22-11-1942]. A very cheerful prospect, no doubt, for a reasonably early application of the democratic panacea to India! The usual facile make-believe assumption that caste is being fast—is very nearly—'extinguished,' and that untouchability is consequently disappearing fast, and has practically ceased to be a 'problem,' underlies this final indirect attempt to put the blame on the Muslims. As a matter of fact, if castes and the spirit of Brahmanism really become 'extinct,' the Hindu-Muslim problem will scarcely remain. And on the other hand, some sort of Pakistan *may* solve the Hindu-Muslim problem, even if castes remain; but we surely cannot keep castes, as Mr. Gandhi tenaciously and religiously wants to, and at the same time eat the democratic cake.

It is not necessary further to elaborate the point that the presence of sixty million Untouchables constitutes a major problem of Indian politics; it is mere pretence to say that it is "a question of religious and social reform." And there is no doubt that caste Hinduism cannot absorb these sixty million people and the aborigines, etc.; they are doomed, as von Eickstedt has said, 'by religion and law' to remain the very 'dregs of humanity'; they can only hang on to the Hindu community as barely tolerated rubbish, as a prepetual nuisance and a perpetually rankling thorn in the side of caste Hinduism. There is no future for them if they remain

within the Hindu fold. The real sentiment about the Untouchables deep down in the hearts of all caste Hindus, even professed sympathisers and 'uplifters', was best expressed by a high caste Hindu in the columns of the *Bombay Chronicle* about a year ago, when I had the misfortune to raise quite a hornets' nest by suggesting that the Untouchables, Aborigines, etc., should in a body embrace Christianity. This high caste Hindu wrote with unusual frankness: "The orthodox Hindus who have gladly and voluntarily thrown away seventy million Hindus to Islam and over five millions to Christianity, will not be worried if sixty million Harijans become converts to Christianity." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 10-3-1944]. That was very honestly and courageously said; for caste Hindu politicians are desperately anxious that the Untouchables should continue to call themselves 'Hinuds', so that they may swell the count of Hindu heads for political purposes.

But for any one who thinks clearly and honestly, and thinks as an Indian anxious for the advance of the country as a whole, there is no escape from the conclusion that it would be immensely to the advantage of the country and all its teeming millions, and specially of these hundred million downtrodden Untouchables, Aborigines, etc., themselves, if they cease to be Hindus and embrace either Islam or Christianity. And as a matter of fact this process of conversion has actually been going on for decades and centuries past. The Hindu majorities in the Pubjab and Bengal have within living memory been turned into Muslim majorities. An expert statistician, Mr. G. L. Bansal, contributed, a little while ago, a thought-provoking statistical study of the comparative growth of the two major Indian communities, to the 'Diwanchand Political Information Bureau.' Mr. Bansal writes: "Even a cursory glance over the census figures, showing population trends of the various important communities during the last sixty years in the country, will show that the proportion of Hindus to the total is decreasing decade after decade, while the proportion of Muslims is increasing. In 1881, the population of Hindus in India, per 10,000 of its [total] population, was 7,432; while in 1941, it was only 6,593, which shows a decrease of 839 per 10,000....In contrast to this, the proportion of Muslims has actually recorded an increase from 1,974 [per 10,000] to 2,311, that is, an effective increase of 407 [*sic*].... In 1881 the population of Muslims was 5,01,15,000, and that of Hindus 18,87,19,000; while in 1941, the population of the former

was 9,20,58,000, and that of the latter 25,48,37,000....The percentage of increase in the case of the former during the last sixty years....has been 84, while in the case of the latter it has only been 35. Again, during the past decade [1931 to 1941] the Muslims increased by 18.7 per cent. while the Hindus increased only by 6.25 per cent." The writer concludes that if these proportions are kept up, " the population of Muslims and Hindus will become equal.... after about two centuries from now." Mr. Bansal adds that this estimate is based on the total increase of sixty years, but if it is based on the decennial increase, Hindus and Muslims will be equal in number "much earlier than 200 years," for the decennial increase works out at 1½ times the 60 years' increase. He shows how in Bengal the Hindus have actually decreased by 6 per cent. in sixty years, and adds : " In all provinces where Muslims are in a minority they increased nearly twice as fast as the Hindus." Taking into consideration these and other factors, which further show the greater fecundity of Muslims, Mr. Bansal arrives at the startling conclusion that " Pakistan is already an accomplished fact." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 27-9-1944].

It must not be forgotten that this steady and progressive increase in the Muslim population, and the comparative decrease in that of the Hindus is not entirely due to natural causes; a steady though unnoticed dribble in the shape of conversions is to a considerable extent responsible for these population variations. And it is not social injustice to Untouchables etc. that is alone responsible for these conversions; social tyranny drives many women, especially widows, into the arms of Islam. We hear loud complaints in the Hindu press about systematic ' abduction ' of Hindu women ; but there is reason to believe that in many cases the women are not unwilling to be ' abducted.' A Madrasi Hindu, Mr. Kopargam Ramamurti, referred to the frequent cases of Hindu women seeking relief from such tyranny by embracing Islam, and particularly to three such cases reported in Calcutta papers early in September, 1944, and wrote : " As if to visualise to the public what might have happened to these three women also had they stuck to their husbands' homes bearing all sufferings to the last, the *A. B. Patrika* of the 8th September published very illuminating details about the starving, confining, kicking, catching, throttling and extensive burning of another married girl of 20 years, disclosed at the Coroner's inquest." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 21-10-1944]. In a recent

issue the same paper writes: "Scarcely a week passes without Calcutta papers reporting one or more conversions to Islam, and in nearly every case conjugal unhappiness is alleged, and accepted by the High Court as in no way affecting the *bona fides* of the apostate ....The women who resort to such conversions are often women of education, University graduates, research scholars, and evidently not liable to be carried off their feet by a sudden gust of emotion ....We have heard that every Friday several Hindu women of the working classes are converted to Islam in the Juma Masjid in Bombay." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 7-4-1945.]

This steady drain, especially of young womanhood, from the Hindu fold, is no new or unknown thing. For instance, a Bombay daily dated 5-12-1941 reports that during November, 1941, fifteen Hindu widows appeared before the Registrar, Presidency Magistrates' Courts, Bombay, and declared that they had embraced Islam. And this particular kind of drain is one reason why the Hindu Draft Code wants to improve the Hindu woman's social status. A recent newspaper report says: "The Rt. Hon. M. R. Jayakar, a co-opted member of the [Hindu Law] Committee, asked the witness [a High Court Solicitor authorised to represent an orthodox anti-Code body] whether he knew that hundreds of Hindu women, either young widows or those not happily married, changed their faith every year, and that depletion of the Hindus in that way amounted to about two per cent. in ten years." [*Times of India*, 31-1-1945]. Finally, there are conversions of educated good caste Hindus through conviction also. For instance, I have before me the account of a public meeting of Muslims at Ahmedabad, presided over by Sir Mahbubmian Kadri, held in honour of a Pāṭidār graduate who had embraced Islam along with his wife and seven children. [*Vatan*, 12-9-1943]. Thus is the communal problem becoming gradually and painfully more insoluble.

XXII
CONCLUSION.

How the problem of the major communities is gradually, almost imperceptibly, becoming more and more complicated and more difficult, is strikingly illustrated by this message from Calicut, dated 25th September, 1930: "The 29th anniversary of the Mounathus (*sic*) Islam Sabha, a Muslim religious association in Ponani, South Malabar, was celebrated recently....Khan Saheb V. Attakoya Thangal, who presented the report on its working, stated that 390 persons, consisting of 258 men and 132 women, were converted to Islam in 1928; and 399, consisting of 274 men and 125 women, in 1929; and that the total number of conversions made by the Sabha upto September, 1930, was 15,744. These converts represented 42 castes or communities all over Malabar." [*Indian Daily Mail*, 2-10-1930]. Even more striking is the most recent report from Tinnevelly about the mass conversion to Islam of about a thousand 'Ādi-Dravidas' (*i.e.*, Untouchables) in the district. [*Eastern Times* 31-7-1945, and many other papers.] These conversions, and the statistics of population trends we have noticed above proving the slow but steady depletion of the Hindu community, cannot decisively affect the unfortunate communal problem immediately, or even in the near future; they simply prolong and gradually aggravate the agony and slowly but inevitably make the problem more and more insoluble. And during that prolonged and embittered agony, the country as a whole must suffer, making the presence of a peace preserving 'third party' quite plausibly necessary if not inevitable. Indeed, some of the actions and words of those who talk of immediate 'complete independence' of India, and who profess an intense dislike of the 'third party,' give fair cause for suspecting that in their heart of hearts they do not really wish the 'third party' to 'quit.'

What can ease this inevitably growing tension of two antagonistic forces pulling in directly opposite directions, and establish at least a tolerable working equilibrium? Neither militant Hinduism, nor militant Islam, seems to be in a mood to compromise and come to terms. In such a pass, a third force calculated to ease the tension and establish a triangle of forces is clearly indicated. And

no true Indian, who really thinks of and cares for the country as a whole, would like that third force to be a perpetually dominating, patronising and dwarfing 'third party' quite alien to the land and naturally unsympathetic and 'soulless'; if we must have a third party, it must be native to the land, flesh of its flesh and bone of its bone. I venture to think that we already possess a very promising nucleus of such a third party in our Indian Christians. This fast growing Christian community, now numbering well over nine millions and also growing fast in influence and importance in all fields of national life, has long been looked at askance, and even despised, by Hindu and Muslim alike as somehow not quite native, not quite Indian at heart, simply because it professes the faith of the present alien 'third party' and is to that extent alienated from either. But this is an illogical and an unjustly suspicious attitude. As a matter of fact, the Indian Christians ought to form the much needed bridge between the Hindus and the Muslims in the matter of politics; they can have no political quarrel with either. Doctrinally, again, they can form a valuable cultural bridge between Muslims and Hindus; in the person of Jesus they have a common object of veneration with the Muslims, and through the same personality they can share in the gentle and non-violent ethic of the highest Hindusm. And surely they can be trusted to be at least as patriotic, as staunchly Indian, as the Hindus who look wistfully at the North-East or the Muslims whose eyes are turned even more wistfully towards the North-West.

As I have said elsewhere in this connection, I am not a Christian; nor am I much attracted by the personality of Jesus or by the Christian creed, as so many highly educated Indians are, openly or secretly. I was influenced by purely impersonal and very practical considerations when I suggested last year in the columns of the *Bombay Chronicle*, after long and careful thought given to the two major Indian problems,—the communal one and that of Untouchability,—that the Untouchables, the Aborigines and some millions of touchable but low and unclean castes should, for their own good and the ultimate good of the country, enter the Christian fold. If I were a Hindu of Hindus, a Brahman of Brahmans, I think I would unhesitatingly urge the same course for the ultimate good of my own Hindu community. For I honestly believe that the Hindu community as a whole will be actually strengthened by shedding these irksome irritants whom it can never absorb and assimilate

and who are bound to prove more and more peremptorily irksome as time passes and as they become more and more self-conscious If they embrace Christianity, the very good cause they have for their present growing bitterness and anger against caste Hindus will disappear. And they will be equally friendly with their Hindu and Muslim compatriots. All Muslims hold Christ in veneration ; and I know no educated Hindu who has not almost the same veneration for his personality. When emancipated from their age-long crippling disabilities and superstitions, this great body of more than a hundred million Indian Christians will surely become a power in the land, a wholly beneficent power making for peace and progress, that would hold the balance between the two contending parties and save them from the terrible suicidal conflict towards which both are surely and of set purpose heading. They will be professing a religion which is professed by the most progressive and powerful nations of the world to-day, and they will thus prove not only a steadying force working for internal peace, but also a progressive one free from the baneful narrowing influence of the suicidally bigoted and reactionary nationalism that is in fashion today.

I do not think that the austere and unimaginative Protestant denominations would suit the inherited, almost instinctive, beliefs and customs of these peoples. They would find their spiritual haven in the more colourful, more emotional and more imaginative Roman Church, which is far wiser, too, in dealing with backward and primitive races and peoples ; and they would feel more at home in the bosom of that great Church because of its own—if I may be permitted to say so—soulful superstitions, especially Mariolatry. All our Untouchables and Aborigines,—in fact almost all Hindus,—are by long heredity, almost by nature, worshippers of a Mother Goddess—Mātā,—just like the Mediterranean races whose ancient culture is believed by some scholars to have been akin to that of the ancient Indians of Mohenjo Daro ; and they would certainly be immensely benefited and elevated spiritually if they give up their terror-haunted faith in the hideous and malignant goddess, ever hungering for bloody sacrifices, and Mātās of Small-pox and Cholera and Plague and all that is foul and evil, and come to put their loving and implicit trust in the beauteous and benign Mother of Christ. As it is, the vast majority of Indian Christians, now numbering more than nine millions, belong to the Roman Church.

No unprejudiced observer can fail to see the enormous good Christianity has done and is doing in our midst. Any one who has watched, for instance, the Goan and East Indian Christians coming up finely in the last six or seven decades,—in education, in self-respect, in temporal and spiritual progress,—must, if not blinded by narrow communalism or bigoted ' nationalism,' and if really anxious for the advancement of India as a great united nation, admit the truth of this patent fact. The usual jibe that Indian Christians, and even Muslims, cannot quite get over the caste feeling is beside the point, and not quite true. Even if in South India the converts retain their caste feeling, do the Christian priests treat converts from untouchable castes as untouchable ? Are they supposed to pollute their pastors and their churches by their contact ? If not, it is a great advance on their status as untouchable Hindus. And even if the higher caste converts cannot yet shed their inherited prejudices, they must be knowing that what they do is doctrinally wrong, an act of ' adharma ' and a sin according to the cardinal doctrines of their new faith ; while according to the doctrines of Hinduism, according to ' religion (Śruti) and law (Smriti) ', observance of untouchability is a matter of true ' dharma ', as myriads of Untouchables themselves believe. If by their turning Christians they get rid of this degrading and most damnable self-abasement, it is a great step forward. If they remain Hindus, will they forget, will they be allowed to forget, their inherent untouchability, when, as we have seen, even a member of the Viceregal Cabinet is not allowed to forget it ?

There is a vague idea abroad that it is not necessary for the Untouchables to give up their present faith ; that as they are educated more and more, ' civilised ' more and more, their disabilities will disappear. The leaders of the Untouchables also have no clear idea as to how they are to shake off their disabilities. No doubt some of them are saying,—as they did at the Karhad Conference,—" we are not Hindus, we are Untouchables." But surely this would mean perpetuating the stigma ? Surely they do not want to go down in history as a mere rabble of ' Untouchables ? And of what use is their verbal denial of Hinduism if all except perhaps a few modernised leaders continue to worship, as they do, gods worshipped by lower caste touchable Hindus ? In the alternative, is it possible for them to abjure Hinduism and live without any religion ? Is it reasonable to expect these hopelessly poor,

uneduated, uncultured, superstition-ridden millions to reach at a bound such a stage of highly sophisticated secular civilisation or philosophical cynicism as to do without any religion and form their own 'democratic' colonies, something like the theoretically idealised Soviets ? If even highly educated Hindus and Muslims cannot reach a stage of academic secularism after more than a century of secular education, how can Untouchables, Aboriginals, etc. be expected to jump incontinently over the high prison walls of their gross superstitious beliefs and form independent 'democratic' colonies ? And can mankind in the mass do without some superstition or other, that is, some irrational or supra-rational religious faith held more or less in spite of logic and reason ? Even the most savage measures, extending over a whole generation, ruthlessly adopted by a mighty and autocratic state machine, seem to have utterly failed to drive religion out of Russia. Does not this recent experiment confirm the experience of countless centuries of human history that some religion or other is, rightly or wrongly, almost a basic need of human nature ? And it is, I venture to think, equally a fact of history that the religion of a people has much—very much—to do with its social and political well being, its progress in worldly as well as cultural and spiritual matters, and even its status in the scale of nations.

If the Untouchables, Aborigines, etc. remain Hindus, they remain for ever weak and down-trodden, divided amongst themselves as they are into hundreds of mutually untouchable castes. If they become Muslims, the communal problem, bad as it is, becomes a ghastly nightmare. If we dispassionately and objectively ponder over all these factors, giving due weight to all relevant considerations, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that nothing could be better for themselves and for the country as a whole than the conversion *en masse* of all Untouchables, Aborigines, etc. to Christianity, the most progressive of dominant faiths, hampered least by irrational taboos or injunctions, akin to Islam as a monotheistic faith of Semitic origin, and akin in spirit even to Hinduism at its best.

By their fruits ye shall know them. And we need not go far to see and realise what Christianity has already achieved among the Untouchables and Aborigines of South India, Chhota Nagpur and other parts of the country ; we have also before us the splendid work done by Christian missions, medical and educational, in the

last one hundred and fifty years, among all communities and classes; and no less remarkable is the indirect influence of these missions and their selfless work in rousing the social conscience of educated Indians. There are 'scientific' anthropologists who grow hysterical when 'Christianity' or 'civilisation' are even mentioned in connection with aboriginal and primitive tribes; they want us to believe that the primitive mind is *sui generis* and is bound to lose its pristine virtues if brought into close contact with modern civilisation, and that, therefore, rather it is civilised man who must be brought back to the level of Rousseau's 'noble savage.' I know very little of anthropology, but I know that a competent student of the subject has in a recent contribution shown how this theory of a unique primitive mentality no longer holds the field. Writing in the organ of the Calcutta University, Mr. Nabendu Datta-Majumdar says that "Raymond Firth and Driberg, who have the experience of living among primitive tribes for a long period, are of the opinion *that there is no fundamental difference between primitive mentality* and civilised mentality;" and again that "Paul Radin, an American anthropologist....thinks that primitive peoples are capable of highly reflective analysis." [*Calcutta Review*, August, 1944.] This recent opinion accords with commonsense and is also supported by a striking instance of the change civilisation through the medium of Christianity has wrought in a primitive race believed at one time to be incapable of assimilating modern civilisation. Writing about the American Negroes, "the descendants of Negro slaves," Dr. Frederick Hertz says in his profoundly learned and admirably objective study of 'Nationality': "....given the necessary educational and social conditions, their development has offered overwhelming evidence for the possibility of complete mental assimilation and for fundamental intellectual and moral equality." ['Nationality,' p. 73.] This uncompromising admission of the Negro's 'equality' with the white man is based, a footnote tells us, on "the comprehensive survey on this much disputed subject in 'The Physical and mental Abilities of the American Negro,' edited by the Department of Education, Howard University, Washington D.C., 1934." We have only to compare these Negroes with the Obeah and Voodoo haunted kinsmen of theirs in Nigeria, etc., in order fully to realise the difference a new religious outlook can make and has made, in spite of the depressing and even antagonistic

socio-political environment in which the American Negroes find themselves placed.

It is not my object to expatiate on the work done by Christian missions in India. I shall give here only a few facts about the work done among Untouchables, Aborigines,etc., by Christian missions that I have come across in my desultory and haphazard reading. About the Christian missionary spirit, Sir Shanmukham Chetty said in his convocation address at Annamalai University on 30-11-1943 : " In my own experience I have come across the silent and unostentatious work done by Christian missionaries and nuns in remote and unheard of villages and hamlets ; and I have often asked myself the question : ' Why is it that in spite of all its great philosophy the Hindu religion has not kindled this spirit in the hearts of its votaries ? ' The missionary spirit of social service seems to be alien to our temperament and upbringing." [*Sunday Observer*, 5-12-1943.] I think Mr. Kishorlal Mashruwala has given the right answer to Sir Shanmukham's query. Inquiring why " our social life has become dispersed like sands on the seashore," he attributes this unintegrated and anti-social individualism to the Vedanta philosophy which puts the salvation of one's own self, *ātman*, above every thing else. [*Harijanbandhu*, 27-9-1936]. Bhai Paramananda also writes : " Anti-social behaviour is a crime in every society, but in India the Hindus consider it as a beau-ieal paragon of righteousness. . . . Karma and Moksha [salvation of the self] have killed the Hindus." [*Mahratta*, 15-5-1942]. Next I would cite the high and eloquent praise, based on long first hand experience, bestowed by a renowned Bengali anthropologist, Sarat Chandra Roy, M.A., B.L., on the splendid work done by missionaries among the aborigines —Mundas, Oraons, etc.—of Chhota Nagpur, in his valuable monographs on these tribes. I shall quote only two passages from the many and enthusiastic pages Roy has devoted to describing this work : " The aborigines of the Ranchi District had suffered cruelly and long. They had hitherto been looked down upon by their neighbours as untouchable Pariahs ; now they came to know that they too were men and fit to be treated as such. When the missionary appeared on the scene, they were groaning under many wrongs and indignities. With their conversion to Christianity came a better appreciation of their rights as men and as tenants. They saw a happier era dawning before them. . . . Christianity seemed to these aborigines the only means to drag them out of the miser-

able pit into which they had faller....There was a frantic rush to the fold of Christianity." ['The Mundas,' p. 294.] Further on Roy writes: "It is to the British Government and the Christian missions, however, that the Munda owes the heaviest debt of gratitude." [*Ibid.*, p. 353]. This was written in 1912; and nearly twenty years later, in 1931, S. C. Roy once again paid this handsome tribute to the great work done by missionaries among the tribes of Chhota Nagpur: "Thus the good effects, on these primitive tribes, of Western missionary influence have been, on the whole, to develop their intellect by education, to give them a wider outlook on life, and a higher standard of living and a higher ideal of culture, and generally to raise them in the social scale, to liberate them from their old tribal taboos...., and to increase their sense of responsibility and self-respect both as individuals and as a race." [Quoted from the *Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, by Simon Bara, a Christian Oraon, in his pamphlet 'Aboriginals and Missionaries,' p. 19.] And this is what Christianity has achieved in about three generations among a people who for thirty-three times three generations had been treated as mere 'Vanya' ('Jungly') tribes, as despised sub-human savages outside the pale of caste Hinduism and incapable of rising higher in the scale of humanity.

After a tour among the aborigines of Chhota Nagpur, Pandit Visvanath Sastri, representing a Hindu organisation, was constrained to write in 1942: "Christian missionaries are doing good work among these people even in these hard days." From the figures the Pandit gives we learn that in the Bihar Province, out of the total number of aborigines, 32,88,600 (*i.e.*, 90.3 per cent) are 'Hindu' or 'Tribal', while 3,19,726 (*i. e.*, 9.7 per cent.) are Christians; the percentage of literacy in the aborigines of 'Hindu' origin is 35.6 among Christians, and 5.0 among non-Christians; in Mundas and Oraons it is 8.4 among Christians and 1.0 among non-Christians. This testimony comes, be it noted, from a Pandit who is a member of the All India Hindu (Arya) Dharma Seva Sangha, a body that can not be suspected of partiality for Christian missions. [*Mahratta*, 6-10-1942.]

Even more instructive are the statistics of literacy in the three important Stats of Baroda, Cochin and Travancore, given by Mr. A. V. Thakkar, who has been in charge of the Congress 'Harijan Uplift' movement. In a highly critical article headed 'Compulsory Education in Baroda,' Mr. Thakkar gave figures of literates per 1,000 of population in Baroda State from the Census Report for 1941

and compared them with those in Cochin, Travancore and British Gujarat. These ranked in an ascending order thus: Baroda 229, British Gujarat 238, Cochin 354, and Travancore 477. Briefly sketching the history of compulsory primary education in Baroda since its inception in 1895, Mr. Thakkar pointedly asked his readers to note that "there is no compulsion in the States of Travancore and Cochin," criticised the Baroda State for its educational policy, and wound up with an unintentional play on words: "This is not a creditable state of affairs for the State of Baroda" [*Social Welfare* (Special Number), 19-9-1942.] If Mr. Thakkar had cared to analyse the population of the three States, he would perhaps have found out the true reason for the paradox that in spite of compulsion Baroda should show two-thirds of literates per thousand as compared with Cochin, and only one-half as compared with Travancore. Here we get the help of another comparative statistical study from an 'Arya,' Mr. S. N. Parashar, contributed to the *Mahratta*: Cochin:—Hindu population 7,55,796, Christian population 4,01,122; Travancore:—Hindu population 31,46,447, Christian population 20,02,718. Evidently the higher figures of literacy in Cochin and Travancore as compared with Baroda are not due to anything exceptional in the administration or atmosphere of the first two States; if anything untouchability is even more rampant in Malabar than in Baroda or Gujarat; exasperated by the caste mania he saw in Malabar, Vivekananda declared: "These Malabaris are all lunatics." [*Prabuddha Bhārata*, February, 1944]. It is the presence of these strikingly large numbers of Christians in the Malabar States that accounts for the high percentage of literacy in them. That also was, perhaps, the main reason, along with the growing importance of Christians in these States, why 'temple entry' became in them, with Mr. Gandhi's blessings, a part of state policy; and that again seems to account for the complaints from Travancore of "systematic persecution of Christians," leading to an exodus of "one lakh and fifty thousand Syrian Christians from Travancore," in the last ten years. [*Bombay Sentinel*, 1-2-1944 and 10-2-1944]. But this political zeal for 'Harijan Uplift' and for 'temple entry' has not made any real change in the Brahmanism of Malabar. Speaking on the 'Problem of India,' on 13-10-1944, in the congenial surroundings of the South India Club at Delhi, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, Diwan of Travancore, "referred to the Scheduled Castes and said that their problem was not intrinsically Indian as

the Jews and Negroes had had to face worse fates." [*Eastern Times*, 22-10-1944.] We may not be able to follow the logic of this superbly Brahmanical argument, but its callous cold-blooded inhumanity is unmistakable and characteristic. Can there be a better justification for the early and wholesale Christianisation of these Scheduled Castes ?

Not only does Christianity bring education and literacy in its train,—even for tribes with dialects that have never been put on paper before,—it also brings, as observed by Roy, a better way of living, a higher standard of home life. A striking tribute to this aspect of Indian Christianity was spontaneously paid recently by a Hindu writer of Portuguese India, Mr. Yeshvantrao Suryaji Desai, in a special number of a nationalist Marathi weekly. In an interesting study of Goan Christians, Mr. Desai rightly deprecated the cheap sneers which most Indians indulge in when speaking of their Christian compatriots, and wrote: "The home life of the Goan Christians, their well appointed houses, their artistic bent, their self-dependent way of living, are all worth examining and studying and worth taking a lesson from. Look at the shabbiness of the home of a high salaried Hindu, and look at the neat way of living of a mere bandsman from among these Goan Christians !. . . . They know how to enjoy life. . . . Being but mere mortals they too have faults ; but, when we Hindus sneer at them, ought not we to do so after due introspection ? " [*Dhanurdhāri* (Divali Number), November, 1942]. Even a hostile witness, quite opposed to the evangelisation of Aborigines etc., Mr. D. N. Majumdar of Lucknow University, is constrained to admit : "Whether Christianity has succeeded in transforming the mental and moral life of its converts is an open question, but it is undeniable that the material advancement brought about by the Missions has more than compensated any lapse in this respect." [*Modern Review*, May, 1938].

From every point of view, the solution of the problem of untouchability, and incidentally of the communal problem also, suggested by me seems to be unobjectionable and even desirable though it gives a shock to most people, especially high caste Hindus, at the first blush. When I first suggested it to a young Brahman Professor of History, he exclaimed, "You are a dangerous man ! " And when I adumbrated it in the columns of the *Bombay Chronicle* a versatile but shallow and rankly communal politician with no fixed moorings went almost into a fit of hysterics and in a

very badly written screed called me "always a bitter enemy of Hindus, Hinduism and Hindu aspirations." As I have been subjected to far worse—though far more grammatically written—invectives, any time these twenty five years and more, for speaking out unpleasant truths and exposing public humbugs and plolitical charlatans, I can ignore this frenzied howl, which is much more damaging to the English language than to me, with amused contempt. But I must add once more that I have absolutely no interested or malicious and malignant motive in advocating the wholesale Christianisation of Untouchables, Aborigines, etc. As I have said before, I am neither professedly nor at heart a Christian. Although I have the highest respect for the Christian creed, and for the personality of Jesus, neither has cast that spell over me which I find cast over many Indians in spite of themselves and in spite of the particular creeds they scrupulously profess to the end of their lives, so that I am often reminded of the unwilling and querulous tribute wrung from the professedly irreligious poet, "Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean!" Even Mr. Gandhi has not escaped that elusive and impalpable but all-pervasive influence that has not ceased to emanate from Calvary. He may not have been baptised in his South African days as publicly averred in 1936 by his son Hiralal who even challenged his father to deny the fact in public; but the Mahatma's much admired and far more advertised 'Gandhian' teaching is little more than Christian teaching as interpreted by Ruskin and Tolstoy. He seems to have outgrown that influence now, for he has declared emphatically that if he had the power he would stop all proselytisation in India; he is reported by Mahadev Desai to have said: "If I had power and could legislate, I should certainly stop all proselytising." [*Harijan*, 11-5-1935]. And yet it was Mr. Gandhi himself who had once agreed that if Hinduism did sanction untouchability the best thing the Untouchables could do would be to embrace Islam or Christianity. In a characteristic disquisition Mr. Gandhi referred to "rejection of Hinduism and wholesale conversion to Islam or Christianity" as one of the courses "open to these down-trodden" people and wrote: "And if a change of religion could be justified for worldly betterment, I would advise it without hesitation. But religion is a matter of the heart. No physical inconvenience can warrant abandonment of one's own religion." I wonder if Mr. Gandhi did not realise that he was using the words 'worldly betterment' and 'religion' in a sentimental

and indeterminate, though sharply antithetical, sense. If I were an Untouchable I would ask him : " Is it ' religion ' to force me and my progeny, as you religiously would, to continue to be sweepers generation after generation, to the end of all time ? Is it mere ' worldly betterment ' if I leave such a ' religion ' ? " But serenely secure in his own interpretation of the Hindu Śāstras, and forgetting this casuistry, he proceeded : " If the inhuman treatment of the Panchamas were a part of Hinduism, *its rejection would be a paramount duty* both for them and for those like me who would not make a fetich of religion and condone every evil in its sacred name." [' Young India ' (Ganesan's reprint), p. 465. Italics mine.]

Every sincere Hindu who has studied this distressing problem has on *a priori* grounds arrived at the conclusion that untouchability and the outcaste must be the logical and inevitable products of the caste system, based fundamentally and from the first on inequality by birth ; as our social reform paper put it epigrammatically, " wherever there are castes, there will be outcastes." [*Indian Social Reformer*, 30-7-1927]. And all who have also investigated the Śāstras from the Vedas downwards have had to admit that untouchability of the outcaste does form ' a part of Hinduism.' I cannot do better than reproduce here what I wrote just about twenty years ago, emphasising Mr. Gandhi's hopelessly inconsistent position and pointing out how inevitably he had fallen between two stools: " But he wants to remain a sanātani and also to be a reformer ; he must have the four castes, and yet he would do away with the fifth, the logical and inevitable outcome of the four. Pandit Malaviya is also playing the same game of hunting with the hounds and running with the hare,—with what melancholy dialetic results can be gathered from the disputation he had only two weeks ago in Bombay with some orthodox Pandits. We shall quote only one question and answer. . . . ,—the whole dialogue, or rather catechism, as reported in the *Gujarati* is profoundly interesting : ' The Pandits —Will you yourself say whether Antyajas are untouchable according to the Śāstras or not ? Mr. Malaviya—*They are certainly untouchable*. But, still,—etc., etc." [*Times of India*, 20-1-1925. Italics mine.] And, it is scarcely necessary to point out, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is an infinitely better scholar of the Śāstras than Mr. Gandhi is or ever was. Every honest man who has investigated the problem is bound to agree with Pandit Malaviya's scholarly and honest admission. Untouchability being thus " a

part of Hinduism," it becomes, in the words of Mr. Gandhi, "a paramount duty for them," the Untouchables, to embrace either Islam or Christianity. It is for the Untouchables to choose which of the two alternatives suggested by Mr. Gandhi they shall adopt; and it is for the Hindus to choose which alternative they would like the Untouchables to adopt.

EPILOGUE.

I

This series of articles, which began in the *Rast Rahbar* of Bombay on 29th October, 1944, and concluded on 25th March, 1945, has had two very interesting and entertaining sequels. Soon after the series began, I was given to understand that it was being carefully studied at Sevagram, Mr. Gandhi's headquarters, and that a reply would be given to it when concluded. Professor Wadia, whom I came to know, and to regard as a friend, since I began replying to him, also threatened a rejoinder. In the meanwhile the Editor of the *Rast Rahbar* got in touch with the Congress dignitary mentioned in Section I, whom I had met in October, 1944, and with whom I have had two long and extremely revealing ' heart to heart ' talks ; and this new Congress friend of mine who was anxious to see these articles published in book form, also promised that the articles would be carefully considered at Sevagram, and that a reply on behalf of Mr. Gandhi would be given in due course.

Professor Wadia's reply appeared on 1st April, 1945. The Professor started with a frank admission : " It would be futile to deny that Mr. Sanjana....has made out his case very often with conspicuous success. It is all the more easy for me to make this admission as I substantially agree with Mr. Sanjana on many points." He further admitted with disarming candour : " Mr. Sanjana seems to be on unimpeachable ground when he attacks Gandhiji's views on caste. I readily concede that Gandhiji's medieval views on caste make most disappointing reading for those who dream of a free and truly democratic India." But out of personal loyalty to Mr. Gandhi, the Professor made a gallant attempt to find excuses for the Mahatma, and said : "....Mr. Sanjana takes Gandhiji's written words too much at their face value without appreciating the actions of Gandhiji. I maintain that whatever maybe his theoretical teaching he has outgrown caste and his whole life has been a glorious negation of the tyranny of caste." The Professor put the blame for the utter failure of the ' Harijan Uplift' stunt on " the Congress and the Congressites, many of whom unfortunately are mere Mahasabhaites under a mask," and stoutly added in defence of his idol : " Gandhiji himself is the one Hindu leader since the days of Buddha who has sincerely striven to do

something tangible for the uplift of the Untouchables. If the has not succeeded as he deserves, it is because the caste feeling is too deep rooted to be cast out even by Gandhiji."

In order to prop up this emotional and therefore illogical and lame defence of Mr. Gandhi, Professor Wadia cited two or three general verbal denunciations of untouchability from Mr. Gandhi's speeches and writings, such as calling untouchability " the greatest blot on Hinduism," and " an excrescence upon Varnāśrama "; and he quoted, evidently as a convincing argument, the following gush from an address delivered by Mr. Gandhi in 1921 : " I was at Nellore on the 6th of April. I met the Untouchables there and I prayed that day as I have done to-day. I do want to attain Moksha. I do not want to be reborn. *But it I have to be reborn, I should be born an Untouchable* so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings, and the affronts levelled at them, in order that I may endeavour to free myself and them from that miserable condition." Professor Wadia was so overcome by the sentiment he had italicised, that he added : " The spirit in which this utterance was conceived is worthy of Buddha and Christ and must rank high in the religious history of the Hindus."

The Professor reiterated his faith that " Gandhiji had done more for the Untouchables than Dr. Ambedkar", and tried, rather unconvincingly, to defend Mr. Gandhi's paper-'solution' of the problem. I replied to this laboured defence of a hopelessly indefensible case on 8th April, 1945, and my reply, *minus* some personal amenities and some wrangling about interpretation of Sanskrit texts, etc., reproduced below, will speak for itself :—

Professor A. R. Wadia's reply to my series of articles on the problem of untouchability is rather disappointing as it relies more on sentimental special pleading than on factual and logical arguments ; it is even depressing as showing once more how even our best minds are inured to untouchability, this blot on our humanity, how insensitive they have become to this enormity that stalks our land. I wonder if ever Mr. Wadia has tried in his imagination to put himself in the place of an Untouchable ; if he had, he would not have done deliberate violence to his undoubted powers of thinking logically and straight, as, I am afraid, he has done just to whitewash

the façade of 'Harijan Uplift' exposed by me with scrupulous and ample documentation......

Mr. Wadia writes: "Gandhiji himself is the one Hindu leader since the days of Buddha who has sincerely striven to do something tangible for the uplift of the Untouchables." In the first place, may I ask what Buddha did for the "uplift of the Untouchables?" Nothing that history knows of. And how could he do anything when he believed, as Mr. Gandhi believes, religiously in caste by birth according to Karma? The only thing done by Mr. Gandhi is to plead for mere 'touchability'; otherwise he wants the Bhangis to remain Bhangis,—not only through their present lives, but for all succeeding generations to the end of time. It is a pity that such sentimental comparisons with Buddha and Christ should still continue to vitiate our arguments about practical matters. Thus, once again, Mr. Wadia sees a spirit "worthy of Buddha and Christ" in Mr. Gandhi's sentimental verbiage: "But if I have to be reborn I should be born an untouchable." Do the words mean anything? Cannot Mr. Wadia or myself say the same words as glibly? Is it at all necessary for Mr. Gandhi to take the roundabout and problematic way of first dying and then being reborn, in order to do what he says he wants to do when so reborn—"so that I may share their sorrows, sufferings and the affronts levelled at them," etc., etc.? He can easily and promptly do so in this very life by going and living among, say, Bhangis—who do admit outsiders into their caste—and becoming one of them, instead of generously wishing to do so in the next problematic incarnation. How do these noble but empty sentiments or gestures 'uplift' the Untouchables, whose stigma is perpetuated by labelling them 'Harijans'? As the Marathi saint poet pertinently asks, "whose hunger was ever satisfied by eating 'bolāchi cha kaḍhi' ('curry made of words only') and 'bolāchā chi bhāta' ('rice made of words only?')" Untold numbers of Christian missionaries have gone to the ends of the world, literally buried themselves among and become one in word and deed and spirit with the lowly and the heavy laden, primitives and savages, outcastes and lepers. But nobody grows maudlin over their silent self-sacrifice, or compares them with Buddha and Christ. And, to be quite frank, isn't it time we gave some rest to poor overworked Christ and Buddha when talking of Mr. Gandhi?

In spite of what I have written at such length on the subject, Mr. Wadia harps again on Mr. Gandhi's merely theoretical claim

of the equality of all castes, and even italicises it "*there is absolutely no idea of superiority or inferiority.*" I have shewn how inequality by birth has *always* been at the very root of the caste idea, and how Mr. Gandhi himself has unconsciously given away this show of 'equality' more than once. According to Mr. Gandhi's religiously held doctrine, even the 'Christ'-like saying about being reborn again as an Untouchable is a mere figure of speech, a mere flourish; for, as a devout believer in Karma, Mr. Gandhi knows, and is certain, that he is definitely not going to be reborn as anything so low; in fact he says that he does *not* want to be born again at all but to attain final beatitude. And, even granting the theoretical equality of all castes—(which is definitely and certainly against the teaching of Śruti and Smriti),—of what earthly and practical use is this theoretical equality to the Bhangi who must, generation after generation, remain a scavenger and be nothing more according to Mr. Gandhi's grand law of nature?

Mr. Wadia wholeheartedly agrees with my reading of Mr. Gandhi's views on caste and says that these "medieval views on caste make most disappointing reading for those who dream of a free and truly democratic India." And yet, in order to salvage his wrecked dream, Mr. Wadia desperately throws his Master's "written words" overboard and asks me to "appreciate" his "actions." Mr. Wadia writes: "....whatever may be his theoretical teaching he has outgrown caste and his whole life has been a glorious negation of the tyranny of caste." I am tempted to apply this criterion to Mr. Gandhi's teaching on continence and procreation and his actual practice in life, and ask Mr. Wadia if he is prepared to apply his logic in this field of Gandhian teaching also. But I will spare him the distressing qualms and blushes likely to be caused if I press that query home. So I will take up another line of approach and say that it is not for me to harmonise Mr. Gandhi's words and deeds, precepts and practice; I only know that what Mr. Gandhi has written he has written seriously, deliberately, after careful consideration, as part of the Gandhian gospel that is to save the world and that is to place him amongst the prophets and saviours of the world, at least according to his disciples including Professor A. R. Wadia. Nor has Mr. Gandhi withdrawn or modified what I have quoted from his authorised publications; in fact the latest editions that have appeared only a few weeks ago are mere reprints of those I have quoted from. If Mr. Gandhi's actions traverse and

grows so rapturously dithyrambic as to lug in more than once poor Buddha and Christ. Contrast with this the immense gain in self-respect and self-reliance Dr. Ambedkar's movement has brought about; the determination to assert their common humanity, to refuse to be treated any longer as lower than animals, or even to be patronised by sanctimonious political bosses, climbers and bounders; the resolve to assert their rights as Indians to enter all walks of life, to advance in every possible direction, to carve out their own destiny, to fight for social, educational and economic equality with higher castes,—all unmistakably exemplified in the great Karhad conference held a few months ago. Let Mr. Wadia lay his hand on his heart and say which of the two sections he would like to belong to if he were an Untouchable himself......

And even granting for the sake of mere argument the Utopian equality of all castes declared by Mr. Gandhi, and granting that the Gandhian 'Uplift' if scrupulously put into practice would have placed all 'Harijans' at a bound on a footing of equality with Brahmans and Banias—(no sane man can honestly believe this hot air, but granting this Barmecide's feast spread generously before the 'Harijans' to be real and substantial and not a mere illusion)—and granting that the noble 'Uplift' plan has miscarried because of what Mr. Wadia calls "the hypocrisy of many so-called Congressmen,"—can Mr. Gandhi be exonerated by thus distinguishing him from the Congress? Is not Mr. Gandhi the Congress, and the Congress Mr. Gandhi? Has the Congress, apart from Mr. Gandhi, any existence of its own, any will of its own? Consider only the painfully ridiculous and humiliating attitude of indecision, the twists and turns, adopted by the Congress apropos of the War at the sweet will of Mr. Gandhi, making a sorry exhibition of the gutless and backboneless Congress before a contemptuous world. And when Mr. Rajah appealed to this sole autocrat and dictator of the Congress against the atrociously vile trick of double-crossing played on him about his Temple Entry Bill, what was Mr. Gandhi's reply? Why is Mr. Wadia offended when I call the reply "Mahatmic?" Is it not such glaring contradiction between precept and practice during the last twety-five years that has naturally made words like 'Mahatma' and 'Mahatmic' terms of satirical import? It is this shifty unreliability that has given rise to the perversion of a well-known Sanskrit epigram: "manasyanyat vachasyanyat karmaṇyanyat mahātmanām," which means in effect, "Mahatmas have

one thing in the mind, say another and do quite a third one."....
With such an untenable and even immoral case to prop up, no wonder the usually lucid and logical Professor of Logic and Philosophy becomes painfully involved in a logical (or, rather, illogical) morass when he tries to bolster up Mr. Gandhi's absurd and impossible solution of untouchability, *viz.*, that the Śūdras should absorb the Untouchables. "If," writes Mr. Wadia, "they [the Untouchables] are content to be Śūdras, let it be so, for millions of Śūdras through centuries have been content to be Śūdras and figured at least as touchables." And he wants me, and other non-Hindus, to 'encourage' this 'reform,' as otherwise we would be "hampering and hindering the cause of reform among Hindus." Evidently Mr. Wadia forgets or ignores the fact that I have conclusively shown how no Śūdra caste will have anything to do with Untouchables even if they are dubbed 'Śūdras.' But, to put that consideration aside, what becomes of Mr. Wadia's candid confession that Mr Gandhi's "medieval views on caste make most disappointing reading for those who dream of a free and a truly democratic India?" Will India become more fit for democracy if 60 millions are added to the 160 (or so) millions of the present Śūdras, all divided into thousands of 'non-commensal' and 'non-connubial' watertight sub-castes, all tied down religiously to 'paricharyā,' *i.e.*, service of the higher castes, that is, menial and manual labour, and all religiously forbidden to rise higher in life socially or economically? It is really distressing to see a trained logician and philosopher, and a whilom President of the Indian Philosophical Congress, floundering in a morass of his own creation simply because he will not put his emotional reactions aside in judging a problem that requires to be approached in the cold white light of reason in the most rigorously logical manner. But what staggers me is Mr. Wadia's astounding statement that if the Untouchables are 'uplifted' so as to make Śūdras of them, "this may not satisfy Mr. Sanjana or myself, but it would mark a revolution in Hinduism fit to make it a world religion." There is a saying in Marathi, "if Auntie had moustaches, we would have called her Uncle," which applies here. Unfortunately Aunties in real life do have moustaches sometimes, and yet they are not called 'Uncle.' Here, too, we may suppose that the impossible does happen, and the Untouchables are 'uplifted' to the level of Śūdras; but how will the mere removal of untouchability make Hinduism which believes in castes by birth and hereditary

vocations, and which has three thousand such castes that do not intermarry or even dine together, a ' world religion ? ' And how can a communion so hopelessly divided and believing religiously in inequality by birth be fit for democratic self-rule ?

THE AGNIBHOJ EPISODE.

Of the hundreds of citations and facts given by me in my articles, the only one Professor Wadia tried to controvert was the story in Section I about Mr. Gandhi's opposition to the inclusion of an Untouchable, Mr. Agnibhoj, in Dr. N. B. Khare's second Congress Ministry in the Central Provinces. The Professor wrote, serenely confident and quite unconscious of Nemesis lying in ambush round the corner : " In spite of my respect for Mr. Sanjana I felt certain that his account of Gandhiji's attitude towards the inclusion of Harijans in the cabinet of the Central Provinces could not be correct, and my suspicion has been abundantly justified through the information supplied to me by my dear old and trusted friend, Mr. K. G. Mashruwalla. I have it on the authority of Gandhiji himself that he never vetoed the inclusion of a Harijan in Mr. Khare's cabinet. The particular Harijan whose inclusion in the ministry was not favoured by the Congress high command was a raw graduate who was keeping terms in the Law College." I have made inquiries through the Editor of the *Vividha Vritta*, and I am in a position to assure Professor Wadia that he has been positively misinformed by his " dear old and trusted friend," and that I am privileged to make the following statement on unimpeachable first-hand authority :

" It is wrong to say that Mr. Gandhi vetoed the inclusion of Agnibhoj not because he was a Harijan but because he was a raw graduate keeping terms in the Law College. Mr. Sanjana need not withdraw his charge at all because Mr. Gandhi never discussed the person and qualifications of Agnibhoj at all. He blamed Dr. Khare because *according to him (Mr. Gandhi) the inclusion of a Harijan in the Ministry would create undesirable ambitions in the minds of the members of that ignorant and downtrodden community and would lead to their ruin.* Dr. Khare retorted saying that it had been a mistake not to include a Harijan when the first cabinet had been formed, and he had rectified the mistake when an opportunity offered, and that he had supported his (*i.e.*, Mr. Gandhi's) own programme of

Harijan uplift. To this Mr. Gandhi replied that it was not an item of Harijan uplift according to him (Mr. Gandhi) and that Dr. Khare had done so purely from selfish reasons so that his second Ministry should have a backing of the Harijan community. Mr. Mashruwalla was not present at Sevagram when this scene took place [on that fateful night of 25th July, 1938]."

I repeat, and I am in a position to prove, that this statement is based on unimpeachable authority, and I repeat emphatically that the information supplied to Professor Wadia from Sevagram is, to put it very mildly, a pious fiction invented to save the face of his "dear old and trusted" friend's Master.

II

The second 'authorised' reply has a strange history. The Editor of the *Rast Rahbar* received a communication from Sevagram late in March 1945, asking him whether he could come over to Sevagram for an interview with Mr. Gandhi, or whether he would like to have the interview at Bombay during Mr. Gandhi's impending visit to that city. In any case he was asked to draw up the questions he might want to ask, and to submit them beforehand for consideration. The Editor naturally elected to see Mr. Gandhi in Bombay and forwarded a copy of the questions to the intermediary. The draft questions were altered as desired by the intermediary who accompanied Mr. Gandhi to Bombay; but ultimately he said that the Mahatma was too busy to grant the promised interview. Finally, a copy of Mr. Gandhi's so-called reply to the pre-censored questions, addressed in the first instance to the intermediary, was furnished to the Editor who published it on 15th April, 1945, side by side with the questions (with a few quotations from Mr. Gandhi's writings cited in my articles). I give below the questions and Mr. Gandhi's full 'reply.' This reply, *minus* the portion referring to myself (enclosed here in brackets) was widely publicised by Mr. Gandhi's publicity department, and has been noticed by many papers all over India. And below this 'reply' I give my rejoinder which appeared on 22nd April, 1945:

Question 1.

Do you still adhere to the views you have declared about caste system in your writings?

Question 2.

Do you still believe that the caste system is the best possible social system and that you want the world to adopt it ?

Question 3.

Do you still believe in and justify the existence of sub-castes ?

Question 4.

Castes as known in history have always been based on birth and inequality resulting from it. Is then such a social system compatible with democratic political institutions ? What is the future of the Bhangi caste if it must continue, as you insist, to do its scavenging work for generation after generation ?

Question 5.

Is not Mr. Sanjana's indictment of cow-politics substantially true ?

Question 6.

Would you be in favour of abolishing caste distinctions in the Hindu Code which is proposed to be passed in the Central Legislature ?

Question 7.

What is your answer to Mr. Sanjana's thesis that " the Congress is an orthodox Hindu body and that under the fostering care of the Mahatma it has become a champion and revivalist missionary of orthodox caste Hinduism ? " If Mr. Sanjana's statement is true, would it not detract from the claim of the Congress to be a purely nationalist and non-communal body ?

Question 8.

Is caste system compatible with democracy ?

MR. GANDHI'S 'REPLY':

" Instead of undertaking the thankless task of going through the forest of my writings to find out what I have or have not said about caste, you have rightly handed me the following questions about me for answer. Here then is my answer.

I do not need to refer to my past writings to say what I believe today and since what is apposite is my present belief I wish to say that the caste in Hinduism as we know it is an anachronism, must hinder the growth of true religion and must go if both Hinduism and India are to live and grow from day to day. The way to do it is that all Hindus should become their own scavengers and treat the so-called hereditary Bhangis as their own brothers. I take the

Bhangi as he is in the lowest rung of the ladder. This answers all the questions and I need say nothing more. But I wish to add that as far as I remember my writings, they contradict the suggestions carried by the questions. Evidently the questioner has not taken the trouble to read my writings. [As for Mr. Sanjana, if he believes of me or the Congress what is attributed about either to him he is an ignorant or hasty reader. I have held a high opinion about him. For, the late Mahadev Desai used to describe him as his friend and an able translator.] Everybody knows that the Congress from its inception has not been and is not now an orthodox Hindu body. It is a supremely heterodox democratic body and is daily becoming more and more so probably because of my fostering care."

MY REJOINDER TO MR. GANDHI :

"Mr. Gandhi's so-called 'reply' to my scrupulously and fully documented articles, or rather to certain definite 'pre-censored' questions put to him through a high Congress dignitary by the Editor of the *Rast Rahbar*, is so patently evasive and even disingenuous that I would not have cared to notice it if a number of friends had not pressed me to do so. As a matter of fact, the questions put to Mr. Gandhi, and the quotations from Mr. Gandhi's considered and authoritatively published writings illustrating each question, as published on pp. 1 and 3 of the *Rast Rahbar* of 15-4-1945, are for any intelligent reader a sufficient answer to the amusing 'reply' given by him ; it can be easily seen how he deliberately shirks giving straight answers to clear cut questions. The reason for this shifty evasiveness is not far to seek ; it is that he has *not* changed his deliberately expressed and published views on caste as the *Rast Rahbar* concludes,—and as the *Times of India* (18-4-1945) also seems to have concluded,—and that it does not suit Mr. Gandhi's convenience to say so in so many words. His actual words are: '*I do not need to refer* to my past writings to say what I believe today and since what is apposite is my present belief I wish to say that the *caste in Hinduism as we know it* is an anachronism, must hinder the growth of true religion and must go if both Hinduism and India are to live and grow from day to day.' The catch lies in the words italicised by me ; what he says about caste here is only a generalised repetition of what he has written and what I have quoted, namely, that there should be only four castes, that there is

no 'high' or 'low' in these castes as all castes are equal, and that the Bhangi is the equal of the Brahman or the Bania. But we know that this is mere playing with words and mere eyewash ; for, as emphatically ordained by Mr. Gandhi, the Bhangi is to remain a Bhangi for ever, generation after generation, whether caste Hidus do treat him as Mr. Gandhi says they 'should',—or do not, as they most certainly don't and won't. As for Mr. Gandhi's hollow cant that "all Hindus should become their own scavengers," I am sure no man in his senses can or will take it seriously. After making this generous declaration (which is mere mockery), Mr. Gandhi takes refuge behind the Bhangi 'brother' and hastily and abruptly gives up even the show of answering the questions which he himself says were 'rightly handed' to him 'for *answer*'—(the singular is quite noteworthy)—and simply says: 'this answers all questions and I need say nothing more'. I leave to the readers to judge if 'this answers all questions' and whether Mr. Gandhi 'need say nothing more.' And yet he *does* say something more that is worth noticing; he says that his 'writings contradict the suggestions carried by the questions'; he even accuses me of being 'an ignorant or hasty reader' of his writings and of drawing wrong conclusions from them. All this clearly shows that Mr. Gandhi has *not* 'changed his views' on caste, and that he does *not* take back what he has written ; on the contrary he justifies it in this roundabout manner. And, as a matter of fact, he *cannot* take it back. For, as I have said before, what I have quoted is mostly from authorised compilations of his carefully selected writings, published by his own press again and again ; they constitute, not a 'forest' as he pretends, but the very cream of the Gandhian Gospel; what is more, at least one of them has a preface by Mr. Gandhi himself, and some of them have been reprinted in full as recently as a few weeks ago. And yet Mr. Gandhi says: 'I do not need to refer to my past writings to say what I believe today.' If this means, as is hastily concluded by those who do not know Mr. Gandhi's dialectic, that he has changed his views, why does he allow fresh editions of these manuals to be published? Why does he not proclaim to the world that what he has taught in these writings is 'adharma' and is now cancelled? Either he should do so, or have the courage to say uncompromisingly that he means, and stands by, what he has written. Instead of taking such a manly course, to resort to pitiful shifts and evasions does not become a man who claims to be a world teacher.

APPENDIX 'A'.

[*The Bombay Chronicle*, February 28, 1944.]

"CASTE MUST GO."

The leading article in your issue of the 4th instant under the uncompromising caption, " Caste Must Go,' deals in the right spirit with a major problem of Indian politics. But it suffers from some inaccuracies and does not go to the very root of the problem. It says that 2,500 years ago Buddha denounced caste, and that " for centuries thereafter caste was practically abolished in India." This is a popular delusion. Caste never was abolished in India; and Buddhism—and even Buddha himself—never denounced the caste system. Buddha only asserted the right of the lowest caste to share in the spiritual culture reserved for the three highest castes and monopolised by the Brahmins. In fact any number of stories in Buddhist literature show that caste and untouchability were not at all affected by Buddha's teaching. To take only two typical ones: A princess washes her eyes because they are polluted by seeing a Chandala; and when two untouchables, who enter the Taxila University pretending to be 'caste' men, are found out, they are manhandled and ignominiously cast out. In fact, a cardinal doctrine in respect of Buddhahood requires that whenever a Buddha is born, he *must* be born in a Kshatriya family. And this is exactly what is believed in Jainism also; every Jina *must* be born of Kshatriya parents. This insistence on caste distinctions in Buddhism and Jainism was quite natural and inevitable, and that for the reason I have repeatedly pointed out, namely, that caste is an inseparable concomitant and result of the belief in 'Karma' and reincarnation. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism discarded this fundamental Hindu doctrine of Karma and rebirth, whatever else both may have discarded when rejecting the authority of Hindu scriptures. Hence, " Caste must go " can only mean " Hinduism must go." This interdependence of the two dogmas, — Karmic reincarnation and its inevitable consequence, caste inequality by birth,—has nullified all the 'denunciatons' of caste by the 'numerous saints and religious reformers,' ancient and modern, mentioned by you. As a matter of fact, not one of them, down to the present day, has really 'denounced' caste; they all have concentrated on surface treatment

I shall ignore the amusing personal compliments paid to me by Mr. Gandhi, though he seems to have forgotten, or ignored, two highly revealing special interviews I had with him in 1920 and 1921. But I cannot congratulate him—or those who have put him in this unenviable position by getting such questions posed—upon this farcical end of the brave show of 'answering' me that I have been hearing of any time these four months. I should like to know if even 'Dear M......' to whom Mr. Gandhi's 'reply' was addressed in the first instance, or Professor Wadia who also was anxiously waiting for this 'reply' like myself, is satisfied with this sadly humiliating exhibition of inept shiftiness and disingenuous evasion."

CONCLUSION

Commenting on Mr. Gandhi's curtailed and publicised 'reply,' the *Times of India* (18-4-1945) wrote: "Mr. Gandhi's latest pronouncement on the caste system appears to mark an advance on his earlier views,......he has in the past.... defended the caste system......Mr. Gandhi's unequivocal denunciation of this institution should encourage Hindu social reformers throughout the country." But the leading Congress paper of Bombay naturally knows the Mahatma better; and so, putting its finger unerringly on the catch in Mr. Gandhi's words "caste......as we know it," pointed out by me also, wrote: "The words 'as we know it' may be interpreted by different persons in different ways and that may hinder reform. We understand Gandhiji to mean that the present-day caste restrictions should all go, namely, the obligation to follow the caste profession and restrictions against interdining or intermarrying with persons of any other caste. If we have misinterpreted Gandhiji, we may be corrected." [*Bombay Chronicle*, 23-4-1945]. Thus to the wary Congress paper Mr. Gandhi's so-called 'denunciation' of caste is not so 'unequivocal' as it is to the unwary *Times of India*. In fact, as I have shown above, it is quite equivocal. I do not think it necessary to add anything except that the more I study Mr. Gandhi's writings and pronouncements, the more I am constrained to agree with what Mr. Jinnah said about him a few months ago in the Punjab. Presiding at the Jullunder session of the All India Muslim Students' Conference, Mr. Jinnah referred to Mr. Gandhi's summersaults in political and other fields and concluded: "He does not mean what he says and does not say what he means." [*Eastern Times*, 17-11-1944].

of the disease, such as ' temple entry ' (real or pretended—in practice it has proved a ghastly farce), or a new label like ' Harijan ' (which only confirms the stigma under a flattering name). These being the bedrock facts, the conclusion arrived at by Dr. Ambedkar and other leaders of the Untouchable castes is inevitable, namely, that, there is no salvation for them in the Hindu fold so long as the basic doctrines of the Hindu socio-religious polity remain what they are. It is no use deceiving ourselves any longer ; the caste Hindus cannot, and will not absorb the Untouchables. It is best to face facts squarely, and give up such camouflage as ' temple entry ', ' uplift of our Harijan brothers,' and so forth, and let these sixty millions of Indians go out of the Hindu communion so that they may be able to live with self-respect as human beings, and not as patronised and barely tolerated inferior creatures called by courtesy ' people of God.'

So we come to the question : Which religion should they adopt ? After a long and careful consideration of the problem I have come to the conclusion that for their own good, and also for the ultimate good of the country, they should in a body adopt Christianity. I am not a Christian, nor am I attracted by the Christian creed as so many educated Hindus are ; I am influenced by none but purely practical considerations in making this suggestion. Were I a Brahmin myself, I would strongly urge the same course. If they adopt the other alternative and turn Muslims, the baffling Hindu-Muslim problem will become hopelessly insoluble ; it is not at all necessary to explain in detail why it should be so. Secondly, the Hindu community will be actually strengthened by shedding these irksome ' irritants ' it cannot assimilate ; and if they turn Christians they will lose their present growing bitterness and animosity against the Hindus and will be equally friendly with both Hindus and Muslims. Thirdly, as they are, almost by nature, worshippers of a Mother-Goddess, ' Mata,' they will have the benign and beautiful Mother Mary to worship instead of the gruesome and malignant goddesses of smallpox, cholera, etc., etc. Fourthly, they will belong to a religion to which belong the most progressive nations of the world, and will thus escape the baneful influence of the present day false nationalism that blindly regards everything ' western ' as intrinsically evil. Finally, when thus emancipated from their age-long disabilities and superstitions they will become a power in the land that may hold the balance between the two contending major com-

munities, and thus make something like real and stable self-government really possible.

J. E. SANJANA.

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 6, 1944.]

"CASTE MUST GO."

The letter appearing under the above caption in your issue of the 28th Feb. written by Mr. J. E. Sanjana, makes extremely interesting reading. It reminds one of the most interesting series of articles written some years ago by "Historicus' in the "Times of India," when that paper was making a laudable attempt, through these learned articles, containing quotations of communal leaders, to create feelings of goodwill and amity between the Hindus and Muslims in India and thus helping His Majesty's Brittanic Government to fulfil their promise of conferring the boon of Swaraj on India the moment communal unity and goodwill made their appearance in this country! It was unfortunate, however, that some 'short-sighted' M.L.C. was responsible for the disappearance of these highly spiced articles from that daily.

Mr. Sanjana's advice given to the Depressed Classes to become Christians is no doubt a sane one. But Mr. Sanjana has made a few mistakes in his interesting letter which should be brought to his notice.

Mr. Sanjana says, "Buddhism and even Buddha himself never denounced the caste system. In fact any number of stories in Buddhist literature show that caste and untouchability were not at all affected by Buddha's teachings." If Mr. Sanjana cares to go through the three Pali books in Buddhist literature, *viz*:—Assalayan Sutta (Majjhima Pannasak 2, Vagga, 5), Vasetta Sutta (Majjhima Panna Saka 2. Vagga. 5.) Sutta Nipata. Vagga. 3), and Vasula Sutta (Sutta Nipata, Vagga. 1) he will find that Lord Buddha has denounced the caste system and untouchability in definite terms. I shall give here a few quotations of Lord Buddha from these to prove that the great teacher did denounce caste system and untouchability. When the Brahmin Ashwalayana argues about the superiority of the Brahmins, Lord Buddha quotes to him the admonitions that Asita Devala Rishi administered to the seven Brahmin recluses, *viz*:—"You assert that the Brahmins are superior to

all the other castes and that they are the direct descendants of God Brahma. But are you sure that your original ancestors married only Brahmin women, and that your grandmothers and great gandmothers married only Brahmin men ? " They admitted that they could not say anything definite about it. So Lord Buddha advised Ashwalayana not to persist in saying that Brahmins were superior to others. In Vasetta Sutta Lord Buddha says, " A man does not become a Brahmin by birth, but only by deeds does one become a Brahmin." In Vasula Sutta Lord Buddha says : " No human being is born a Chandala (ubtouchable). Only by his deeds does a person become a Chandala or a Brahmin. A man who is frequently overcome by anger, who is revengeful, sinful, atheistic, or robs others is a Chandala." In fact Lord Buddha revived the high philosophy and tenets preached by the Vedas and Upanishads, as the pure old Aryan culture had undergone degeneration and the people had started observing rigid rules of caste and were performing bloody sacrifices wrongly saying that they had been sanctioned by the Vedas. Nowhere in the Vedas or Upanishads could be found any passages which justify the caste system as it exists to-day. No doubt, some centuries after the death of Lord Buddha the Mahayana school came into existence and later on transformed itself into canonical Buddhism, with its mythology, and a sort of caste system did make its appearance and the whole system gradually transformed itself into the present day Pauranik Hinduism. In short lord Buddha did emphatically denounce the caste system, and it is a travesty of facts to say that caste and untouchability were not at all affected by Buddhist teaching.

Mr. Sanjana is perfectly right when he says : " There is no salvation for the untouchables in the Hindu fold so long as the basic doctrines of the Hindu socio-religious polity remain what they are." To this I will add something more and say that the Hindu religion itself as it exsits at present is doomed unless it changes its present ideas about caste system and untouchability. However Mr. Sanjana quotes Dr. Ambedkar about the change of religion of the untouchables. Perhaps Mr. Sanjana is not aware that the learned Dr. Ambedkar is one of the most profound scholars of Buddhism (a fact known to very few), and is at heart a staunch Buddhist. Many a time this great student of Buddhism has expressed that the salvation of India and the whole world lies in following the noble tenets and philosophy preached by Lord Buddha. It need not be

emphatically maintained that Dr. Ambedkar would never have entertained any love for a religion which supported caste in any form.

Lastly Mr. Sanjana is advising the untouchables to embrace the Christianity followed by the most progressive nations of the world. I am sure if Lord Jesus Christ had come down to this sinful world to-day, and seen with His own eyes what the so called progressive Christian nations are doing, He would have said with a shudder "Is this the Christianity that I preached to the ancestors of these nations, and for which I sacrificed myself on the cross? God have mercy on them." In short if Mr. Sanjana wants the untouchables to become Christians let them follow the Christianity preached by Lord Jesus, and practised by Father Damian who worked among the lepers in the Pacific islands, and by Rev. C. F. Andrews who worked for the down-trodden coolies in India, Africa and Fiji islands and not the Christianity practised by the "most progressive nations of today."

"K."

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 6, 1944.]

HUNTING THE HINDUS.

The activities of the British Government when they flung themselves upon Nationalist India in August 1942 had curious bye-products. It produced the war-mentality against the Hindus. The Government singled them out for special treatment in the matter of collective fines. There was a balleyhoo to all those who wanted to hunt the Hindus.

The Muslim League desires to split their homeland into two; Prof. Coupland into six. Recently one Mr. J. E. Sanjana, an ex-Oriental Translator to the Government of Bombay who while in service wrote anti-national articles in the "Times of India" some years ago, always a bitter enemy of Hindus, Hinduism and Hindu aspirations, has been falling foul with the Rr. Hon Dr. M. R. Jayakar on account of the latter's remark about the historicity of Vikramaditya. Though a Parsi himself he has in another article appealed to the Harijans to embrace Christianity on the plea that the Hindus are too bad a company.

That the Hindus like any other community in the world have defects, no one will deny. That they are to blame for the political

serfdom of India as much as the Mussalmans, no one can deny. That untouchability is a sin and must be wiped out, almost all thinking Hindus concede. That caste has outlived its usefulness has been claimed by Hindu leaders more than non-Hindu leaders. No Hindu claims perfection. No Hindu with his catholic traditions would resent a sympathetic criticism.

But when a community of thirty-two crores, which has survived the shocks of time, which has traditions, social organisations and collective will be (sic) inspired by some of the noblest ideals known to mankind is sought to be hunted by men at the behest of the British policy, it is time that the Hindus dropped their apologetic outlook. Their strength and their weakness are theirs to scrutinise, to restore, to conquer. But they have as much right to exist as anyone else on this earth. They owe no apology to anyone for being what they are or have been.

If Hindus celebrate Vikramaditya festivals amateur historians like Mr. Sanjana with arrogant omniscience try to sneer at them for their lack of scientific knowledge. To the Hindus today, however, Vikramaditya is not a dead conqueror but a living hero. In him we live and he lives in us. A Vikramaditya celebration is not the announcement of a chemical analysis. It is not even a matter of glorying in the past; not merely a voice of the present. As I said at Cawnpore "it is the upsurgence of a sub-conscious national motive. In the apotheosis of this hero we seek the unabashed expression of our supreme desire. In it we stand as what we are—the heir to immortal greatness. .. Vikramaditya is our Pillar of Fire leading us from bondage to the Land of Promise."

At Lahore while speaking at the inauguration of the University Sanskrit Association I dealt with the historic causes that gave birth to the caste system and made it rigid. Next day I received several angry letters attacking me for having tried to trace the 'raison d'etre' of a social phenomenon unique in the world's history. No one can charge me for being fond of a rigid system in these days. There is scarcely a bond of it which I have not personally broken. But I protest against the tendency of many to condemn it without studying the forces and conditions which led to its growth, its dynamic and static aspects, its values. Where would India and its Culture have been when Central Asian hordes or the West descended upon her, without the caste system?

The much worshipped equality which Rousseau taught us and in the name of which the Hindus are condemned, is dead and buried as a living principle. Hitler preaches the superiority of the Germans. Mr. Churchill is the unabashed apostle of White domination of the world. In South Africa we are hunted, segregated and humiliated as pariahs. We know by experience that the White man who talks to us about equality lives segregated as a superman in this land. Favourite jobs are reserved for him. Wherever he lives there spring up a white suburb and a white man's club where Indians are unwelcome. Did we not hear in a big city in this country where some years ago, the European Club maintained a Board "Indians and Dogs not allowed," till an Indian club put up a board "Europeans and Dogs not allowed!" Who can say that this colour caste system is an improvement upon the cultural hierarchy of the caste system? Who can say that the dissolution of the rigidity of the caste system under the quickening influence of modern democracy and nationalism may not create a better social system than the West possesses? With our limited knowledge and plentiful ignorance let us not be too dogmatic in our judgments.

When the British wanted India to be properly defamed Miss Mayo did the trick. Now that the rulers are angry with the Hindu community for their nationalist aspirations, Miss Mayo's foreign and indegenous are bound to spring up almost anywhere. But like Shri Krishna the Hindu community can claim "I am Time." We have lived for centuries. The genius of our culture has more in it than what the rest of the world has produced. And nothing shall deter us from pursuing with steadfastness the destiny which our immortal heritage has carved out for us.

K. M. MUNSHI.

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 20, 1944.]

"CASTE MUST GO"

I am highly gratified to see that my letter under your brave caption "Caste Must Go" has not been ignored, but has elicited two long and sharp criticisms, which seem to me fatal to each other as they are written from two diametrically opposed points of view. Of these critics, I take K. more seriously as there is some attempt at argument in him, and shall answer him, argument for argument.

But I must for the present ignore his first paragraph, full of round-about ponderous sarcasms about my antecedents, which is utterly impertinent to the question at issue ; for, my interesting antecedents are even more irrelevant to the problem of untouchability than perhaps K.'s own as he is evidently a Hindu professing to be a Buddhist, and certainly than the quite intriguing antecedents of Mr. K. M. Munshi who is a rank communalist. These person a lities, and Mr. Munshi's letter, I will deal with when I have done with K. and his letter.

K. tells me that I have mistaken the teaching of Buddha and that Buddha " did denounce caste and untouchability." And he goes on to quote excerpts from Buddhist texts which appear to him to support his view,—which is, it seems, the modern and modernising Buddhist's view, not that of the dispassionate outsider seeking for truth. If K. will glance through the works of life-long scholars of Buddhism, and if he will try to see Buddha and Buddhism in their historical setting, and also try to set aside the partisan exaggerations of later and especially present-day followers and admirers who see their hero through a highly refracting rosy haze,—he will realise that Buddhism was not that terrific world conquering revolution he and they believe it was, but only a ripple on the vast ocean of ' sanatan '—traditional—Hinduism, which had, before this heresy, swallowed Vedic Aryanism—(or rather pre-Vedic Aryanism, as the Vedas themselves are, at least in phonetics as well as vocabulary, and perhaps in ideology too, considerably Dravidianised)—and which has since swallowed all the other isms and ologies that must have come in with at least twenty-five foreign invaders and conquerors who have been absorbed by it in the last 25 centuries more or less. For it is perfectly true that Hindu culture (it is a gross misnomer to call it ' Aryan ' culture) has remained almost stable throughout these centuries just because it has cared more for itself than for more mundane things. Again K. has entirely missed the fact that the words of Buddha he quotes are intended, not for laymen, but for those who have renounced the world to join his order of monks or Bhikkhus. I would ask him to read carefully the interesting dispute in ' Chullavagga ' among these monks as to who among them should have precedence in the matter of " the best seat, the best water and the best food,"—that Bhikkhu who belonged to a Kshatriya family " before he entered the Order," or one who belonged to a Brahmin family " before he entered the Order."

This clearly means that before entering the Order, that is, renouncing the world, the monks did belong to different castes with conventional and traditional ideas of seniority and superiority. The Buddha tells them a parable of birds and beasts and exhorts the monks to give up such ideas ; be it noted that he addresses them as "you who have left the world to follow so well taught a doctrine and discipline." Evidently he would not have objected to these distinctions if these disputants had remained mere laymen ; but since they had renounced the world they must renounce name and caste,—exactly as the Vaidika Hindu had to do when renouncing the world and taking Sannyasa. [S.B.E. XX, p. 192]. Again, the same idea is inculcated by means of the parable of the rivers losing their identity in the ocean : " Just so, O Bhikkhus, do these four castes—the Khattiyas, the Brahmanas, the Vessas and the Suddas —when they have gone forth from the world under the doctrine and the discipline proclaimed by the Tathagata renounce their name and lineage. . . ." [*Ibid* p. 304]. He does not deny or denounce caste as such ; he simply says that having renounced the world they must forget their name and caste,—just as even today the Hindu sannyasi is expected to do. In fact, he could not so denounce it as he was as much a child of his milieu as Christ was of his with his inherited narrow Jewish ideas. He accepted the social polity as he found it, and only tried to soften it as compared with the rigour and exclusiveness of the Brahamanic interpretation of it : otherwise, as the great scholar Hermann Jacobi has rightly observed, the Buddha's Bhikkhu " was but a copy of the Hindu sannyasin." But what Jacobi says later is still more germane to the question at issue : " It may be remarked that the monastical Orders of the Jainas or Buddhists though copied from the Brahmans were chiefly and originally intended for Kshatriyas. Buddha addressed himself in the first line to noble and rich men, as has been pointed out by Professor Oldenberg. . . ." It should also be borne in mind that the direct teaching of Buddha was only for the elect few, the monks belonging to such noble and rich families, who had seen the vanity and futility of the world and renounced it. That is why, as Jacobi says, " the Buddhists were confined at least in the first two centuries of their church to a small part of the country." What ground is there then for averring that Buddha and his teaching revolutionised the whole Hindu world and destroyed all caste distinctions for some centuries ? Strict Hinduism reserved the final stage

of Sannyasa for the three higher castes, and later only for the Brahmans. But Buddha welcomed not only Shudras but even Chandalas into his Order of monks. As Jacobi again observes with perfect justice : " Thus we see that germs of dissenting sects like those of the Buddhists and the Jainas were contained in the institute of the fourth Ashrama (sannyasa), and that the latter was the model of the heretical sects ; therefore Buddhism and Jainism must be regarded as religions developed out of Brahaminism not by a sudden reformation, but prepared by a religious movement going on for a long time." [S.B.E., XXII, pp. XXIX to XXXII]. And this has also been the opinion of all careful students of Buddhism, especially in the matter of castes ; all recognised authorities are agreed that Buddha and Buddhism accepted the caste system as they found it. Richard Fick in his ' The Social Organisation In North-East India In Buddha's Time ' (translated by Shishir Kumar Maitra), clinches the point thus : " The castes continued after the spread of the Buddhistic doctrine quite as well as before ; the social organisation in India was not in the least altered by Buddha's appearance." (P. 32). The same is the opinion of Dr. E. J. Thomas : " The fact of caste was not denied. The Buddhists even formed a rival theory of its origin, and placed the warrior caste, to which Buddha belonged, above the Brahmanical. It was only within the Order that the individual lost his ' name and clan.' " ['Early Buddhist Scriptures', p. 171]. Not only so, even the Hindu ritual continued unchanged among the Buddhist laymen : " But the layman could not, like the monk, discard his caste, and sacrificial ceremonies were needed at birth and other stages throughout his life as a householder." [*Ibid.* p. 185]. If K. wants Indian authorities, let him refer to ' Concepts of Buddhism ' by the indefatigable Bimal C. Law (pp. 15, 16 and 22), and Ratilal N. Mehta's exhaustive and scholarly thesis ' Pre-Buddhist India ' (P. 245). I particularly recommend this book to K. as a salutary corrective for his emotional and therefore erroneous estimate of ' the Lord ' Buddha's gospel and his influence in ancient India.

As for K.'s citation of Buddha's bowdlerised arguments based on the uncertainty of any man's actual descent,—" are you sure that your grandmothers and great-grandmothers married only Brahman men ? "—perhaps K. does not know that it was met by Jaimini in his Mimamsa Aphorisms, and by Shabarasvamin in his great scholium on these aphorisms and again by Kumarila Bhatta in his

huge commentary, with a frank cynicism that will take K.'s breath away. For these Mimamsakas were not mealy-mouthed apologists or believers in the 'hush hush' policy which is unfortunately so prevalent in presentday India; they were rigorous logicians and realists. They go further than Buddha and cheerfully admit 'the failings of women.' I would request K. to look up these illuminating pages in Sir Ganga Nath Jha's translation of the "Tantra-Vartika." If I reproduce them here Mr. Munshi may go into a hysterical fit and howl "Uncle Mayo!"

Now for K.'s startling beliefs (1) that the Vedas did not sanction bloody sacrifices, and (2) that 'rigid rules of castes' had no place in the 'high philosophy preached by the Upanishads.' Where did K. get these 'facts' from? What were 'Agnishtoma' and 'Jyotishtoma,' and 'Vajapeya,' and 'Ashvamedha' and fifty other Vedic sacrifices if not bloody sacrifices at which goats, cows, bulls, horses were sacrificed and eaten,—not in ones and twos only but in their hundreds and thousands in the more important 'Satras?' And as for 'shruti' on castes, why, the very root and rationale of the caste system and also untouchability lie in the famous and terrible Chhandogya text: "Atha ya iha kapuya charanah......te kapuyam yonim apadyeran śvayonim va sukarayonim va Chandalayonim va"—"and those whose acts in this life are evil attain to an evil birth,—the birth of a dog, or of a hog, or that of a Chandala." (X. 2). K. is evidently a born Hindu and professing Buddhist, but decidedly he has yet to learn the very elements of Buddhism and Hinduism. He writes, again, as a wishful sentimentalist,—and writes irresponsibly,—when he says that "the Hindu religion is doomed unless it changes its present ideas about caste system and untouchability." K. does not know the wonderful vitality of this ancient socio-religious polity that has defied pershaps fifty such 'dooms' in the last fifty centuries. The profoundest impression made so far was made by the Aryan invaders; and what remains of real Aryanism to-day? Idol worship, temple worship, linga worship, caste and cow worship, Karma and re-birth,—the very bases of historical Hinduism,—are utterly non-Aryan; they are pre-Vedic, indigenous. Even descent from Vedic Rishis claimed by our Brahmans is almost exactly on a par with the Arab or Persian or Turkish or Afghan descent claimed by too many Indian Muslims. As my friend and senior, Balvantray K. Thakore, has rightly said with dry humour recently in Gujarati: "At present the words

'Bhargava Brahmana' in our language can only mean Brahmans living at Bhrigukshetra—that is, Broach,—where again 'Bhrigu' means 'crocodile'; this word Bhrigu has nothing to do with the Rishi Bhrigu." [Lectures on Modern Gujarati Poetry, p. 175]. As early as Baudhayana (cir. 500 B.C.), four-fifths of presentday 'Akhanda' India,—Avanti, Anga, Magadha, Saurashtra, Dakshinapatha, Upavrit, Sindhu and Sauvira,—were bluntly declared to be inhabited by 'Sankirnayonayah,'—'men of mixed blood.' As late as Kumarila again (cir. 600 A.D.), all outside the narrow limits of Aryavarta north of the Vindhyas are called non-Aryans and even Mlechchhas. So when K. talks of 'pure Aryan' culture he talks of something that exists in the fevered imaginations of half-baked shallow sciolists whose nauseating frothy rant about imagined and imaginary Rishi ancestors, the Bhrigus, has been castigated by some writers in the *Joytirdhara* and *Prajabandhu* of Ahmedabad only a few months ago.

Finally, K. after frankly agreeing with me that the depressed classes must go out of the Hindu fold, insinuates in a roundabout way that perhaps I don't know that Dr. Ambedkar is 'at heart a staunch Buddhist'; and so, inasmuch as the progressive Christian nations are furiously warring amongst themselves, the depressed classes should become Buddhists, or in the alternative, Christians only of the type of Father Damien or Rev. C. F. Andrews. I may state here that Dr. Ambedkar knows me, and also my views on the subject; I have marginally annotated for him a copy of his pamphlet on the subject; and I think he now knows that Buddhism was almost as caste-ridden as Hinduism. As for wars,—taking a panoramic view of Indian history 'from the first syllable of recorded time'—I mean real ascertained history and also our epic and Pauranic legends,—can K. show me a single lustrum, nay, a single year, before the Satanic British Government got firmly in the saddle, when wars—a hundred wars in a hundred corners of this vast land—were not on as soon as the glorious 'Vikrama Kāla,' that is the season of adventures, of invasion and raid and rapine, arrived, regularly after the Dassera? Was it not the almost sacred duty of every king, according to our greatest writer on polity, the 'Lord' Kautilya, to aggrandise himself at the cost of weaker neighbours by means fair or foul, and even fiendish? Did not this teaching of this venerable authority find its glorious last fulfilment in the annual raids—proudly called 'Mulukhgiri' and regretfully recalled to this

day—of the Marathas, right down to the end of the glorious eighteenth century,—in Karnatak, in Andhra and Tamil lands, in Gujarat, in Kathiawad, in Malwa, in Rajputana, in the Doab, in the Punjab, in Bihar, in Orissa and last though not the least, in the happy Bengal of the mid-eighteenth century ? When are we going to give up this ecstatic but static, and therefore idiotic, idealisation of an imaginary golden age in the dead past, and learn instead to fix our gaze on the fateful future ? When are we going to learn to be realists like the erring, fighting, Satanic but dynamic, and therefore progressive, nations of the West ? What has Turkey done ? What have Egypt and Iraq and Syria and Iran done ? As I said twenty years ago, if we want Western forms of Government and polity, if we want to be one of the respected nations of the world, we must Westernise—Hellenise—our minds. For, as the humble adage which I quoted then rightly has it, " we cannot eat our cake and have it too " ; we cannot stick or go back to our old world ideas and ideals of seventh century Arabia, or Yajnavalkya's or Vikrama's India, and live as a world-respected and self-respecting modern democratic nation too. Hence the absurdity of asking the untouchables to adopt the literalist and quietist Christianity of " turn your left cheek if the right be smitten," or the true Buddhism of renouncing and running away from the world. If they did they would continue to be downtrodden as much as they are today—if not more.

J. E. SANJANA.

[*Bombay Chronicle*, March 22, 1944]

" CASTE MUST GO "

Anyone who reads my original letter on this subject and observes its detached temper and cold colourless phrasing, must feel puzzled about the frenzied and illogical fury of Mr K. M. Munshi's onslaught (in very deplorable English) on " one Mr. J. E. Sanjana,"—whom, by the way, one Mr. K. M. Munshi had to court assiduously twenty years ago for a paper to be read at the Gujarati Literary Conference held at Bombay, and whom the same Mr. Munshi had to court as assiduously again about half a dozen years ago in behalf of a friend and protege of his own. " Should auld acquaintance be forgot ? " And that in so unseemly a manner ? Well, well ! Such is the corroding influence of active politics, and

such the intoxication of a little power—' amalno amal ' as they say in Kathiawad,—especially when politics and power are tasted by little minds. "You cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled," as I told Mahadev Desai long ago when he asked my advice as to which of two offers then before him he should accept. I told him to reject the safer one from the worldly point of view—it was from his old friend V. L. Mehta—and unhesitatingly to follow his conscience and his idealism which prompted him to prefer Mr. Gandhi's invitation to join him ; but I warned him never to forget that the cleanest politics, even ' spiritualised ' politics, must clash with his idealism. But Mr. Munshi never has believed in idealism ; the ' main chance ' has been his one ideal in life. No wonder then that he can indulge in such bad manners, bad logic and bad English in his idiotic outburst. But I shall not imitate him ; though I can assure him that if it comes to a slanging match, I am not a novice at the game,—as a Parsi poet and several others know to their cost ; " ham bhi munh men zaban rakhte hain,"—I, too, have a fair command of Billingsgate, which, moreover, I can certainly use more artistically than crude botchers like Mr. Munshi can.

The poet above referred to brought forward in a purely literary controversy those same writings of mine in the *Times of India* which both K. and Mr. Munshi now bring forward as an argument against me when the subject of the discussion is ' caste and untouchability ' ! So I must once for all dispose of these writings which seem to serve as the final unfailing—' Rāma-bāṇ '—argument of my opponents, in any controversy, on any topic. Thus do little minds—like great—think alike !

What K. says in his paragraph of personal amenities is, like his knowledge of Buddhism and Hinduism, very mixed up and based on wrong information. I never wrote in the *Times of India* as ' Historicus ' ; that writer, so far as I know, was a professor of history who wrote very serious articles ; I wrote several articles as ' Hystericus,' poking fun at the ' history ' of ' Historicus ', of the then Vice-Chancellor, Sir C. Setalvad, of Mr. Jayakar and others. Those articles were not, as K. avers, ' quotations of communal leaders ' ; they dealt with history, caste, untouchability, etc. The ' quotations of communal leaders,'—and also from numerous other nationalist leaders and papers,—appeared in the ' Through Indian Eyes ' column. That column again did not disappear, as K. imagines, because ' some shortsighted M.L.C.' brought about its ces-

sation;—just as I had received no 'behest' (as Mr. Munshi avers) from Government to write that column, I never received any—not even a direct or indirect hint—that I should stop writing it. I stopped writing it because I and my editor decided to stop it, especially as under the management of its 'Damaging Editor' our main assailant had disappeared. It will be strange news to K. and Mr. Munshi that the first man to congratulate me upon the result of the debate on this column in the local Council was the late Lakshmidas Tairsee who especially had himself introduced to me for the purpose. It will be surprising news to K. and Mr. Munshi that Dr. Ambedkar has twice borrowed the file of all my writings in the *Times of India* and carefully gone through them and quoted the 'Through Indian Eyes' column as an authority several times in his book on 'Pakistan.' He has also urged me more than once to republish all those articles in book form. Finally, K. and Mr. Munshi will be stunned to learn that after a very long and close study of that same file, obtained through my friend Captain Rustam Dadachanji, Mr. Devadas Gandhi offered me a few years ago the editorship of the *Hindustan Times*. He was at me for nearly two hours (in 1920 his father had sized me up in two minutes when Mahadev was keen on my taking up *Young India* and *Navajivan*) and I had to argue a lot before I could convince him that I could not change caps so easily as can some political mountebanks and cheap-jacks who today follow a Mahatma and tomorrow fawn like poodles upon a Sir Maurice. I was not, and I am not, ashamed of anything I have written, ever since the writing itch seized me just over forty years ago. I am rather proud of everything I have written—not only because of its definite superiority in the matter of clear thinking and clear writing to anything which masters of muddled thinking and shoddy or slushy writing like Messrs. K., Munshi and Co. have written or are ever likely to write,—but also because of its absolute sincerity and conscientious regard for objective truth,—virtues which slim and slimy politicians are constitutionally incapable of appreciating or even understanding. And I have not written one single sentence at the dictate of anyone save my own sweet will; or to please anyone save my own self. So mush for my antecedents. But may I ask Mr. Munshi what they have to do with the problem of untouchability, or the one he has mixed up with it, the historicity of Vikrama? Would it be fair, and (what is more to the point) would it be relevant to the problem at issue, if I were to bring into

this discussion his scarcely decent political summersaults, his positively indecent literary exhibitionism, his relations with his literary devils whose brains and even theses he has openly been accused of picking and lifting from, or his interesting adventures in filmland ? I hope he will not indulge again in such despicable pettifogging tactics and street arab manners.

Having been inured for full forty years to this last argument of uncultured minds, indulgence in vulgar and (what is worse) irrelevant personalities, I am indifferent to the abuse of such vulgarians. But I am really distressed to see the unfortunate English language so cruelly manhandled : " na bādhate tathā daṇḍo yathā bādhati bādhate;" the ' daṇḍa ' of Munshi's bad language does not hurt so mush as his criminal misuse of the poor English language. There are at least twenty outrages on the language in his letter. Why does he use words and idioms he does not know well ? Not only must he misspell the ugly Americanism ' ballyhoo ', he must also make it do duty for ' tally ho ! ' In his great Cawnpore harangue, he similarly 'overreaches' himself in using the word ' overreaching ' : " It is a faith of political power strong and overreaching " ! Mr. Munshi accuses me of ' arrogant omniscience.' As I have often said before, I know my limitations very well : and I have never claimed to know more than I do. Hence I admit I have not made such brilliant discoveries as Mr. Munshi has. To mention only a few, he has discovered that ' L'Esprit des Lois ' was written, not as is generally supposed by Montesquieu, but by Montaigne ; that the correct name of the history of Mahmood of Ghazni's reign was not Tārikh-i-Yamīnī but ' Tārīkhī (with long I, meaning ' historical ') ' Jāmīnā ' (both A's long) ; that the great Ghaznavide's name was not Mahmood, it was Mahmad ; and so forth, and so on, almost ' ad infinitum.' For one could easily fill pages with such choice gems of scholarship from Mr. Munshi's masterpieces of bad information, bad grammar, bad spelling and bad taste. And surely it does not require ' omniscience ' to detect or enjoy such delicious howlers ?

Even taking Mr. Munshi's cheap political claptrap at its face value, does he really believe that the behaviour of the Whites in South Africa or in India, or Hitler's Aryanism, can justify his own ridiculous ' Aryanism,' or the caste system and its inevitable fruit the untouchable ' outcaste ' ? And do all these Satanic whites treat large sections of *their own nationals* as being definitely and doctrinally viler than dogs and swine as our holy Rishis have decreed ?

Mr. Munshi again asks the rhetorical question : " Where would India and its Culture have been when Central Asian hordes or the West descended upon her, without the caste system ? " Has he ever asked himself the other, more pertinent question : " Why did India (with her Culture with a big C) invariably go under whenever such Central Asian hordes descended upon her ? " Was it not because of the same caste system which has prevented India from becoming a nation ? For here again that homely dictum applies with deadly effect : " We cannot eat our cake and keep it too."

But what is really pertinent to the problem of caste is the patent fact that can be easily gathered from Mr. Munshi's howl about my imaginary 'hunt'—and that is his shameless communalism and caste consciousness. His brain is so obsessed with this vicious kink that he is shocked to see me, a Parsi, suggesting that the untouchables should embrace Christianity ; he could have understood it if I had suggested that they should turn Zoroastrians ! Then he goes on to rant about Vikrama—as he was ranting more than ten years ago about Samudragupta with his 'frockcoat', his 'kushan topi' and his trousers. That was before he discovered the virtues—and perquisites—of the Khadi cap, dhoti and sandals. Then again he rants about the beauties of caste. The only thing I can gather from this rambling and confused effusion is that caste must remain what it is and that Vikrama, whether he really existed or not, is a 'national' hero who is going to help us to 'overreach' ourselves. I am glad he has given up Yājnavalkya along with Samudragupta ; because ten years ago he had hysterically howled for reviving the Smriti punishment of death for those who abduct 'Aryan' women,—'prātilomye vadhah smritah' was his favourite text then. This 'nationalist' ex-Congressman did not specify then who these persons worthy of death were, but he left no room for doubt as to their identity when he raved about 'Aryan' women being abducted from railway stations, and so forth and so on ; and it is not necessary to cross the t's and dot the i's in his highly 'nationalistic' suggestion in order to identify the victims of his 'Aryan' and Hitlerian wrath. And such are the men who in this unfortunate land can pose, and are accepted, as 'leaders !' " Hue tum dost jiske dushman uskā āsmān kyun ho ? " No wonder the presence of a 'third party' becomes absolutely necessary for the peace of the country. I have after much thought suggested that this 'third party' should be of the soil, rooted in the soil, and friendly to both

the warring majorities,—I mean the 'third party' consisting of six crores of untouchables and three crores of aborigines. The only other alternative is a foreign 'third party' whom base communalists like Mr. K. M. Munshi are evidently determined to keep in the saddle for at least one hundred and fifty years more.

J. E. SANJANA.

APPENDIX B.

THE UNTOUCHABLES.

In the heyday of Non-co-operation one of the miracles performed by Mahatma Gandhi was the apparent removal of untouchability, at least in some parts of the country. Just like Hindu-Muslim unity, or like the universal adoption of khaddar all over the land, the removal of the sin of untouchability was also declared to be an accomplished fact; and if there was any opposition to this plank in the Gandhian platform, it was, we were assured, from a discredited and hopeless minority which could be contemptuously left to stew in its own medieval juice. Those who were not carried off their feet by the tremendous wave of Gandhian sentimentality, those who knew something of the immense inertia and conservatism of the Hindu masses, and who therefore doubted these "accomplished facts," were told that they were lifeless old fossils hopelessly out of tune with the new life pulsating from end to end of India. Village schools were said to be equally open to the Brahmin and the Bhangi, village wells could be used by the Bania and the Dhed alike, and all Hindus, caste and outcaste, had met in a loving embrace after centuries of estrangement, like long-separated brothers. No doubt there was some grumbling and growling; but that was attributed to the proverbial exception that proves the triumphant rule.

But this Utopian heaven did not last long. The forces of conservatism began to assert themselves even before Mr. Gandhi was sent to jail; and many of the merchants of the Bombay cloth market made it pretty clear that their contributions to the Crore Fund would not be paid if Mr. Gandhi was going to spend any part of it on the Antyaja fad. Numerous villages refused to support national schools which forced caste children to sit with Antyaja children; and they also refused to allow the Antyajas to draw water from the caste wells. Since his return from jail, Mr. Gandhi himself has had to bow before this rising storm of orthodoxy against his heresy and to swallow the bitter compromise of separate schools for untouchable children. And yet, with all this, the fiction of the removal of untouchability being an accomplished fact was sedulously kept up.

Now orthodoxy is in full cry, and even this pretence has been openly thrown aside. In the last few months meetings have been held in Gujarat, and at the very headquarters of N.-C.-O., Ahmedabad, denouncing the " damnable heresy " of Mr. Gandhi and challenging him to prove from the Hindu Sastras that the four castes can remain unpolluted by the touch of the Antyaja. And the culminating point of the reaction has been reached at the Bombay meeting where, according to the *Bombay Chronicle's* horrified wail, it was declared that " in any other country Gandhiji would have been lynched for the declaration of his heresies." The castes are in full revolt and the Mahatma has been practically asked to repent in sackcloth and ashes for daring to criticise the Hindu Sastras and Acharyas in his Belgaum address. And the latest news is that the Kathiawad Political Conference at which Mr. Gandhi is to preside is likely to split on the self-same rock of untouchability.

In spite of the noble defence of the Mahatma's heresy by that staunch champion of Muslim orthodoxy, the *Bombay Chronicle*, dispassionate on-lookers cannot but feel that Mr. Gandhi's position, whatever else it may be, is illogical and untenable. He said in his Belgaum address: " The priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God sets apart any portion of humanity as untouchable." We daresay it is a blasphemy to say so ; but its being a blasphemy has nothing to do with the point at issue, *viz.*, whether the " priests " know more of Hinduism or Mr. Gandhi does, and whether the Hindu Sastras and historical Hinduism enjoin untouchability or not. It is a mere *argumentum ad hominem* to bring in the red herring of blasphemy. But this is the usual weakness of Mr. Gandhi's dialectic ; he mixes up what ought to be—at least according to his own ideas—with what actually is, and then goes on to draw conclusions perfectly agreeable to his own views.

Mr. Gandhi has been repeatedly challenged to a Sastraic debate on this vexed question, but he has always shirked the challenge. It would be stupid to deny that the Hindu law books do enjoin purificatory ritual for those who touch the Antyajas. The testimony is overwhelmingly in favour of the " priests " although Mr. Gandhi claims by implication to know more of Hinduism than they. So in order to prove his thesis to his own satisfaction, Mr Gandhi has resorted to one more illogical device ; he has separated the

Smritis of Hinduism from the purely religio-philosophic books and tried to get support for his heresy from the latter But even this attempt to wrench a few texts in his support from the whole canon of Hindu Sastras is not so successful as he thinks. After all even the law books stand rooted in the older and more inchoate Srutis (revelations) and the origin of the theory of untouchability can be traced to the sacred Upanishads.

But Mr. Gandhi can also cite scripture when it suits him, and he has always relied for his heresy on a verse of the Gita which says: " The wise (Pandits) view equally a learned and continent Brahmin, a bull, an elephant, a dog or a dog-eater (*i.e.* untouchable) "—and this the Mahatma interprets to mean that all these categories are of equal value in the eyes of the wise, and therefore the last, the dog-eating untouchable, should be treated with the same respect as the first, the learned and continent Brahmin. But a present day Pandit has met the Mahatma on his own ground and refuted this interpretation. " True it is," he says, " that the wise man does look upon all these as manifestations of the same Supreme Spirit in the ultimate analysis ; but this is from the viewpoint of the initiate ; for the ordinary work-a-day world the viewpoint must be different. And again, consider the significant order in which these categories are placed in the scale of being ; at the top stands the learned and continent Brahmim and at the very bottom of the diminishing scale, lower even than the dog, stands its eater, the Untouchable ; is this not proof positive that the Antyaja is the lowest creation of God and therefore rightly declared untouchable by our Rishis ? " So far Mr. Gandhi has not given any sufficient reply to this irrefutable refutation ; perhaps, it is not possible for him to give any.
[*Times of India* 9-1-1925].

ON GITA, V. 18.

* ......Pandit Ramanath Sastri, who has translated and annotated the Gita from the Pushtimargi Vaishnava point of view, says in a note on this verse (V. 18) : " Many people very often cite this verse as an authority and say ' what does it matter if we dine with Dheds, or if we touch Dheds ? For the Gita enjoins equal vision in looking on all things.' Now we ask these people : ' If you do not see any difference between a Brahmin and a cow....and an elephant and a dog, then why don't you hail a Brahmin as Dog-ji ?....Why

don't you hail your wife as daughter? For you are possessed of equal-seeing eyes. And just as you are prepared to allow Dheds to dine with you, have you ever shown the liberality to allow a dog to dine with you? '....Therefoıe, good people should understand that persons who put such a meaning on the verse are deceiving the world, and they should not mind the acts and words of these persons". [*Times of India*, 30-1-1925].

THE COMMISSION AND THE DEPRESSED CLASSSES

When the problem of untouchability and the treatment of Depressed Classes was discussed, rather casually, before the Simon Commission during Mr. Turner's oral evidence, the witness is reported to have said: " The social system in the villages has remained untouched but the position is better in cities." Agreeing with this opinion, Sir John Simon said: " Frankly, that was the impression I got during our last tour. There is a considerable distinction between cities and country districts." This interesting exchange of *obiter dicta* appeared in this paper, as by a grim irony of fate, on the day that the Share Bazaar went on strike and a huge Hindu meeting was held in this city in order to protest against the Bombay Corporation's sacrilegious resolution decreeing that there shall be no distinction of caste in the matter of providing drinking water for the children attending Municipal schools—that all, Brahmin or Bania or Untouchable, shall take water from the same supply and drink it from the same cup or " loti." Those who are opposed to this attempted breach in the hoary battlements of caste have cleverly introduced the red herring of sanitation and hygiene—they profess that it is highly insanitary to allow all and sundry to drink from the same " loti." Of course, this sanitary objection disappears as soon as every caste has a separate cup allowed to it—one for Brahmins, another for Banias, a third for lower castes, and specially a separate one for Untouchables. In fact this sanitation stunt is an afterthought—it is the cup used by the Untouchables that is at the bottom of the agitation. And—if oriental metaphor may be permitted—the cat of untouchability was let out of the bag of indignant rhetoric by the distinguished president of the Hindu meeting, Sir Manmohandas Ramji. He protested against the Bombay Corporation's reforming zeal in forcing school children to drink from the same cup "without distinction of caste or creed,"

and, referring to one or two other reforming resolutions of the Corporation, he said : " Not content with these things, the Corporation has passed a resolution that children (in municipal schools) should sit together, without any distinction of caste, whether they be children of (high caste) Hindus or Parsis or Musalmans, or whether they be children of Mahars, Chamars or Bhangis, and that they must drink water from the same cup." From this point of view it is also particularly instructive to note the emphasis laid in the first resolution adopted by the meeting on the current usage of the " Varnashrama dharma " (*i.e.*, Hinduism as based on the caste system) which keeps the Untouchable at his proper distance.

To those who look carefully beneath the surface this mass meeting in Bombay seems only typical of the general Hindu outlook on the problem of untouchability; it only shows that there is no " considerable distinction " between cities and villages in the matter of treatment given to the Depressed Classes. If there is any distinction, it is only apparent and often inevitable in the circumstances of the case. In a great cosmopolitan city like Bombay, it is not easy to distinguish an Untouchable coolie or servant or chauffeur or clerk from his " touchable " *confrere* ; and, even if he can be distinguished, he cannot be kept at his proper distance in the trams and trains of a crowded city. That is why the position in cities appears better than in the villages. A few concrete instances will show that the touch-me-not spirit is no less rampant in the cities than in the districts. No Hindu restaurant in Bombay will knowingly admit an Untouchable ; anyone entering and found to be an Antyaja will be ignominiously ejected, however clean and well-dressed he may be. In the temples the distinction is, of course, still more jealously kept up. A Mahar leader, who is a Barrister-at-Law and Member of the Legislative Council, was very nearly assaulted the other day and ejected with contumely from a great Vaishnav temple in Bombay. The Brahmin Sabha of Bombay which has on its roll the elite of the local Maharashtra Brahmins (who are said to be less caste-ridden than other Brahmins) has very nearly split on the question of allowing Mahar boys to get "darshan" of the temporarily set up idol of the elephant-headed god during the last Ganpati festival. Almost every " National " school, whether in village or town or city, has ultimately foundered on this rock of untouchability, as has been plainitvely and repeatedly admitted by Mr. Gandhi himself. To say nothing of cold weather tourists, it is doubtful if even those

Englishmen who spend the best years of their lives in this country fully realise the tremendous power and all-pervading influence of the well-nigh impregnable caste-system of which the unfortunate outcaste—the "Anāmika," the "unmentionable" fifth caste Untouchable—is the legitimate and inevitable result. No solution of the general Indian political problem can pretend to be even tolerably and temporarily complete if it ignores this basic fact in the socio-political texture of presentday Indian society. [*Times of India,* 20-10-1928].

A TALE OF WOE

In the Baroda State the untouchables are supposed to be better treated than in the adjoining British territory, because the State has made laws recognising the equality of the Antyaja with caste people. And yet in Padra Taluka the other day the standing crop of a poor Antyaja woman was fired, and she herself brutally assaulted, because she dared to send her little son to the local primary school. Now comes a tale of woe from Chanasma in Kadi Prant where an artesian well has been sunk and built with the labour of the Antyajas who were promised the use of the well. But when the well was ready for use they were first flatly told it was not for them, and when they complained to the Punch the latter generously allowed them to lay a pipe 500 feet long at the end of which they could have a tap all for themselves. Now an unexpected owner of the land at the tap end cropped up, so the pipe line was taken somewhere near to the local tank. But this meant pollution of the tank and therefore of the dirty linen washed there. So the tap was accommodated elsewhere. But did this mean the end of the trouble? No; the enraged caste people have cut the pipe line several times and the Antyajas are without water to drink. How very "adequate," to use Mr. Gandhi's term, must the untouchables feel the treatment given to them by their co-religionists!
[*Times of India*, 9-5-1931].

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Quite naturally—and legitimately, too, so far as the game of politics goes—much capital is being made out of the indictment of the Government by the Punjab Depressed Classes Mission in their memorandum to the Simon Commission. What is at the bottom of

this unusual outburst which avers that high caste Hindus have done more for the Untouchables in the last fifty years than has the British Government in the last one hundred and fifty ? We do not know, but it will come out in proper time. We are not acquainted with the actual condition of the Depressed classes in the Punjab but it is interesting to contrast with the above indictment by the Mission —(has it anything to do we wonder with Lala Lajpat Rai's Servants of the People Society ?)—what an organ of the Punjab Adi Hindus (*i.e.*, Depressed classes) has said about Lala Lajpat Rai's indictment of the hard-hearted Punjab bureaucracy for keeping these classes depressed and not allocating a crore of rupees that he wanted for their education and uplift. Said the Gurmukhi paper, *Adi Danka*, in effect. " When the Hindus had Swaraj, were not they masters of crores of rupees ? But then, let alone uplifting us, cruel laws were made to prevent us from getting any education. Smritis were in force then which ordained that molten lead should be poured into our ears if we heard the Vedas recited and that our tongues should be cut out if we recited them. The Hindu leaders of to-day are the descendants of those same Hindus. That uplift of us which they could not accomplish when they had the power and the means, they are going to accomplish now by begging alms of a crore from the Sarkar ! These are hollow pretexts. These are opportunist tricks......"

Perhaps they are ; but as we have said we don't know the actual state of affairs in the Punjab. So let us leave this theoretical wrangling aside and simply record a few facts, on this side of the country, that we do know and that have come to light recently, some only during the last few weeks. We have already seen how the Untouchables of Dehu, the birth-place of the famous saint-poet Tukaram, were punished by Touchables for presuming to send their children to the local school according to a new-fangled resolution of the District School Board. Now we learn that the School Board of the Ratnagiri District has taken it into its head to enforce in all Local Board Schools the Bombay Government's five year old resolution that Untouchable children shall be admitted to such schools and allowed to sit with the Touchable children without any distinction. Mr. Pandu Vithu Mahar, member of Kharepatan School Committee, writes in a Ratnagiri paper : " A few days ago I went to the village of Korle and next day I took with me nine children of our (Depressed) class to the school. The teacher said he would consult

the local elders and then let me know. I said: " If necessary you may make them sit apart for the present, but do please enrol their names.' As he refused to do that also, I came back and informed the Chairman (of the School Board); but I have received no reply so far."

Thirty-three Mahars of Kandalgaon (Dist. Ratnagiri) write in a long letter to another Ratnagiri paper: " In order to gain popularity the local Headmaster has won over the (higher caste) people of Kandalgaon "—be it noted in passing that the " Lok " (" people") of the village *never* include the sub-human Untouchabls—" and is agitating to make the new circular nugatory, and consequently the people of our village have begun to harass us. The headmaster tried to induce us with threats to give in writing that *we* were unwilling to send our children to school or that *we* did not want to have our children sit side by side with Touchables' children. When we refused, the Touchables removed their children from the school after another consultation with the headmaster. Ultimately we were intimidated into giving in writing that we were not willing to have our children seated with Touchable children. On the strength of this document our children are being made to sit outside the school room as before."

It may be said, as it was said by Sir John Simon the other day at Poona, that matters are not so bad in the cities, that " the position is better in cities " than in villages. It is worth noting, therefore, that it is a Bombay paper that publishes a bitter attack on the Ratnagiri School Board for trying to enforce this " tyrannical ' resolution in village schools and warns the Board that if it persists in forcing Touchable children to hobnob with Untouchable ones, " the believers in the Sanatan Dharma (orthodox religion) will prefer to see the schools shut up." It is equally noteworthy that it is in our highly Khadi-clad suburb of Matunga that the Gujarati girls' school is threatened with disruption because a few Untouchable girls want to attend it. The *Nava-Yuga* writes: " It is said that Nationalists who wear Khadi and pose as prime Chelas of Mahatma Gandhi, *viz.*, Messrs. Velji Lakhamsi Napoo and Kanji Master, are at the bottom of this agitation." Again, it is the Lokahitawadi Sangha of another suburb, Dadar, that complains in " Nationalist " papers that " in spite of the (Bombay) Corporation's resolution, as well as that of the (Bombay) Schools Committee, dep-

ressed class students are not given admission in some of the Municipal schools."

So much for the solicitude of high caste people, including Khaddar-clad Nationalists, for the education of their Untouchable brothers. Now for a few samples of other kinds of " uplift." The *Samatā* (" Equality ") publishes the following complaints and grievances of Untouchables : (1) At Kathi (Dist. Poona) the " people " have begun to persecute the Untouchables because the latter have begun saying " Ram-Ram " and " Namaskar ' . Be it known to the uninitiated that these are salutations which only the higher castes have the right to employ ; the Mahars etc. must say " Johar " or " Paya lagu " (I touch your feet) to the " people." (2) The Untouchables of Tanoo (Dist. Poona) tried to behave " like Touchable Hindu people " ; the result of this impudent encroachment is that many of them have had to leave the village and some have migrated to Bavda. (3) At Velapur (Dist. Sholapur) the Mahars are persecuted because they have dared to refuse to address Touchables as " Saheb " and to say " Paya lagu " (" I touch your feet ") in salutation. (4) At Jambad (Dist. Sholapur) the Untouchables refused to make " nautch " and " tamasha " for the diversion of their Touchable lords. Therefore these Untouchables were thrashed, their huts were burnt down or pulled down, and they were driven out of the village limits. (5) At Bavda (Dist. Poona) some Untouchables exhorted their fellow-outcastes to give up eating the leavings of higher caste people, dead animals, etc., and to refuse to do the dirty work of the " people." The elders of the village have told these Mahars with new-fangled notions that it is their " dharma " to eat what they have always been eating and do what they have been doing. Those Mahars who do not follow their ancient and eternal "dharma " have been thrashed by the "people" and threatened with expulsion from the village.

Now for an attempt at " temple entry " and its consequences. A daring reformer of a place near Nasik took along with him some Untouchables right into the local temple of Rama during the Ganpati festival celebrated a few weeks ago according to the " Tilak " calendar. This sacrilege split the " people " into two factions and, according to a correspondent of the strictly orthodox *Bhala*, the emissary of the Hindu Sabha of Poona had to go there and bring about a " compromise " on the following terms : (1) henceforth none should insist on taking Untouchables inside any temple ; (2)

" dreadfully wicked ". For the misguided Untouchables ought to have said, like the patriotic Depressed Classes Mission of the Punjab, that it was their Hindu brothers who were doing so much more for them than the Satanic Sarkar, and that " more than the caste Hindus the Government are responsible for the Untouchables' poverty, illiteracy and backwardness".

What does it matter if a monster meeting in Bombay objects to their children being admitted to municipal schools on equal terms with Touchables' children ? What does it matter if the All-India Marwari Agarwal Conference solemnly resolves on October 29th at its Calcutta session that " it was against their religion and a great sin to touch food cooked by Untouchables," and that they were not yet prepared "to remove the social barrier existing between Untouchables and other communities ? " And what does it matter if that other Depressed Classes Mission, the Dalit Uddhar Sabha of Delhi, says frankly in its latest report that its workers have to face much opposition from the higher castes, and that the Zemindars in North Indian Villages decalre that rather than touch the Untouchables " they would prefer them to become Christians ? " Any way, it is highly unpatriotic to say such things as Dr. Ambedkar said, even if they be true. What has truth to do with the game of politics ?

[*Times of India*, 7-11-1928].

HINDU LAW REFORM.

The All-India Hindu Law Research and Reform Association has just held a conference at Poona under the presidentship of Mr. Justice Madgavkar of the Bombay High Court. The chief aim and object of this Association, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, was careful to emphasise, is " to promote and stimulate the study of and research into the very original authorities " on the Hindu law. Mr. Kelkar thinks it advisable to make it quite clear that the Association as such is not responsible for any concrete bill, embodying reform in the existing law, sponsored by any member of the Assciation. The same note of extreme and apologetic caution runs through the carefully worded Presidential address. " We must be careful,"says the President, " to avoid offending Hindu susceptibilities." How prone to take offence these susceptibilities are is well illustrated by the significant fact that

objection has been taken, at least in one province, to the very word " Reform " occurring in the name and title of the Association. As Mr. Justice Madgavkar observes in his address : " The masses and the women and to a large extent even the commercial classes dread reforms." A large number of politicians and the politically minded intelligentsia are also known to dread the idea of reform by legislation. As the President says, " it is not merely from the Shastris and Pandits but too often those least versed in our ancient laws that the outcry proceeds of sacrilege and of religion in danger whenever any proposal of reform is mooted " ; and he rightly adds, " the Government is not directly concerned in encouraging them ; its declared policy is one of neutrality."

It is no use denying the fact that Hindu opinion on the whole is averse to legislative interference with the Hindu legal institutes whose authors, according to the prevailing belief held even by many highly educated minds, were *trikāla jnāni* (endowed with full knowledge of the past, present and future times) and therefore infallibly authoritative for all time. " Whatever Manu has said is wholesome " is another common saying often quoted with approval. And a dictum of the great law-giver quoted with equal approval even by educated men is " woman is not fit for freedom " ; as pointed out by Mr. Justice Madgavkar in his picture of the joint family system, woman is expected to accept " throughout her life a subordinate position." It is against this tremendous mass of conservatism and legislative inertia that the Association has to battle. As the President has mildly put it, " that there is widespread dissatisfaction with the administration of Hindu law and its results is hardly open to doubt." He has also gently pointed out that some of the fundamental ideas and social institutions on which the structure of the Hindu law institutes was raised are rapidly disintegrating ; the joint family system tends more and more to be out of tune with modern conditions as " the circumstances, economic and psychological, which made for the stability of the joint family tend to disappear " ; the caste system is in " the process of dissolution " ; and, consequently, " the social structure has so altered that the existing law results in consistent hardship not contemplated by ancient principles and legislators."

If such is the case, if the legal rules at present administered must be purged, as desired by the President, of their bewildering variety, complexity and minuteness, if they are to be separated

from " their admixture with ritual and theology ", if they are to be adapted to " existing social facts " if they are to prove of influence in " raising the social standard," if in fact—to speak frankly—they must be thoroughly overhauled, then we venture to think the Association must take up a bolder stand than it has done at present. It should not show so much anxiety to proclaim to the world its attitude of cautious and non-committal neutrality. The President carefully points out, as a sop to irreconcilable, inveterate orthodoxy: " I hope, gentlemen, I have not committed you or the Association to any particular line of action on any particular point." Mr. Justice Madgavkar is surely aware that while there is on the one hand " extreme conservatism," " worship of ancient legislators," and " reluctance to face facts," on the other there is in the Hindu society a small but growing section which is impatient of all such caution and timidity and which wants to sweep out of its way the pious fiction (enunciated by a Shankaracharya while blessing the Association) of bringing about " necessary changes in their law and customs while retaining the principles intact." One of the resolutions shortly to be considered by the All-India Congress Committee wants " to make revolutionary changes in the present social and economic structure of society and remove its gross inequalities." We do not know if the sponsor of this delightfully sweeping resolution has fully realised its effects on Hindu social and religious institutions and practices. But if the Association does not mean courageously to take the lead of this clamant minority and to guide these young hotheads on to paths of wise practical reform, it would better respect the susceptibilities of the dissenting province and drop the dread word " Reform " from its name and title.

[*Times of India*, 24-5-1929].

HINDU LAW REFORM.

Our comments on the presidential address delivered by Mr. Justice Madgavkar at the conference convened by the All-India Hindu Law Research and Reform Association have proved unpalatable in certain quarters and attempts are being made to show that the Association, as well as Hindu society, is not only eager for Hindu law reform, but is actually proceeding at a fine pace in that direction. As an apt and justifying instance in point is quoted the blessing of a religious head a Shankaracharya in which the reverend

gentleman enunciated what we called the pious fiction of " bringing about necessary changes in their laws and customs while retaining the principles intact." To those who are content with such pious fictions and with platform speeches and resolutions, who pretend to see something very bold and daring in the proceedings of the conference and who profess to be content with what appears to dispassionate outsiders very much like half-hearted timidity, we have nothing to say. But we would draw the attention of those who keenly feel the need of Hindu law reform, and who really and earnestly desire to go beyond the stage of mere research and resolutions and speeches, to a book entitled " Legal Aspects of Social Reform " by Mr Paul Appasamy, M.A., LL.B., (Christian Literature Society for India, Madras.) The views expressed by the author of this very practical book of modest suggestions may not prove very palatable to some, but they are none the less worthy of consideration by earnest reformers. " India," says Mr. Appasamy, " is anxious to provide herself with the latest in the way of constitutions, and is professing herself disenchanted with the one which is now in working order. But no constitution, however ingenious or cleverly contrived, could work smoothly or make for progress, if there are permanent features in Indian social arrangements which make for tyranny or oppression or injustice."

And the three " social arrangements " of this kind with which the book deals in detail are just those on which Mr. Justice Madgavkar has unerringly put his finger: status of woman, caste and joint family. Mr. Appasamy observes : " If we look deeply enough into the question, the root of most of the trouble is the antiquated law with which we are satisfied for the ordering of our private lives, while we crave for the most modern of constitutions where public or political life is concerned." That is the tragedy of it. People want democracy, Socialism, even Communism; but they want at the same time to retain distinctions and privileges of caste and sex. The first thing the Turks did when they set out to modernise their State was to adopt the Swiss Code. They did not pretend to bring about changes in their existing laws and customs while retaining the principles of the " Sheri " Law. This reminds us of what Mr. Appasamy says rather despondently of India, that " the country can scarcely be said to be ripe for any radical reform of Hindu Law."

[*Times of India*, 29-5-1929].

UNTOUCHABLES AND THE CENSUS.

Coming events cast their shadows before, and the census of 1931 has been casting its shadow for some time now. A peculiar interest attaches to this census inasmuch as the new constitution of self-governing India will also be hammered out in 1931 and the respective representative strength of several communal interests in the new legislatures will depend on the figures of population supplied by the 1931 census. It is not surprising therefore that various interests have begun pulling in various directions, and in this tug of war the position of the Government is not unlike that of the unfortunate husband of a number of wives with conflicting interests. Thus the Musalmans have raised an indignant complaint that even the census of 1921 was not fair to the Muslim community, but as the Shuddhi *cum* Sangathan movement has come in between, the 1931 census is likely to be still more unfair and to include in the Hindu population a number of backward tribes and sub-communities that are Islamic by religion though they have retained Hindu names and Hindu social customs. The common insinuation is that the vast army of enumerators will consist mostly of Hindus, and these persons will not be strictly scientific in their enumeration and classification but will be swayed by such unscientific considerations and quasi-political influences as the Shuddhi movement. On the other hand, there are high caste Hindus who fear that the Census may further reduce their steadily dwindling majority over all " the rest," and they protest that every one calling himself or herself a Hindu should be returned as a Hindu, irrespective of such considerations as religious or social beliefs and customs. Particularly they want all aborigines returned as " Animists " in past censuses to be classified as " Hindus " with the recognised Hindus, touchable or untouchable. From another point of view, the " Jāt-Pāt Toṛak Mandal " (Caste Breaking Society) of the Punjab also is anxious that the Census should not insist on recording the caste, sub-caste and sub-sub-caste of the Hindu population but should enumerate them as just " Hindus " and nothing more. The contention of the Mandal is shat the usual enumeration of the myriad castes and sub-castes is a sort of State encouragement to the fissiparous tendency inherent in the Hindu social polity which has kept the Hindus from becoming one nation and which is an anomaly in these days of democracy, equality, fraternity.

In striking contrast to these altruistic attempts of caste Hindus to embrace their humble brothers, whether animist or depressed, in a wide communion freed at least on paper from galling caste distinctions, stands the brief memorial of the Audi Hindu Depressed Class Sangha of the Punjab to H. E. the Viceroy on the subject of "Depressed Classes and Census Returns." It is a profoundly interesting document that deserves to be widely known and carefully considered by all who desire to face the actual facts of the complex Indian problem as they are. This short and "humble" petition of the Audi Hindu Depressed Class Sabha prays that His Excellency "will be pleased to instruct the Census Department to make the necessary entries as usual, in the column of caste," as, in the Sabha's opinion, "the absence of so important an entry. . . . will mean serious harm to the low castes." The reasons given for this outwardly surprising demand are worth careful consideration. The memorial speaks out a bare truth when it trenchantly observes: "The real purpose of the Census is to find out all actual facts . . . . . . so that the Government and the country may be in a position to wisely undertake the solution of problems arising in the India of to-day. For, until a disease is carefully and adequately diagnosed, its treatment is difficult if not impossible."

The petition—it is a little masterpiece of cold logical reasoning that mercilessly exposes the humbug underlying many present day shibboleths—bluntly says that "some of the high caste Hindus are making an effort to see all the untouchables and other low castes enrolled not under their distinct castes. . . . , but under the *indefinite* name Hindu;" and, after enumerating the various interesting attempts recently made by caste Hindus for the "uplift" of the untouchables, the petitioners add: "their aim seems not to be the education or betterment of the poor, but rather to add to their numerical strength." Going to the root of the matter the memorial says that "caste is a religious institution," and that "so long as Manu-Smriti and other Hindu Shastras which are the roots of the caste system are sanctioned as among Hindu scriptures by the Hindu world in general, so long will caste system remain. Any superficial means to remove caste rigours merely by refusing to tell one's caste. . . . will be meaningless."

Anyone who knows the facts, and has the courage to face them, must admit that the Sabha has spoken out the whole truth and that the glib declarations of "removal of untouchability" of which we

have heard so much in recent years are mere eye-wash, as witness the shameful use made by the Congress, of all bodies, of such election slogans humiliating to the Untouchables as we have quite recently heard in Bombay City itself. We strongly endorse the demand of the Audi-Hindu Sabha that the Census should give particular care to the enumeration and classification of the castes called "untouchable." Another reason why this should be done is that there is a dispute about the actual number of real untouchables in India ; some put it as high as sixty millions, others would estimate it at about forty millions. A careful Census enumeration would put this dispute at rest

[*Times of India*, 14-10-1930].

THE CENSUS AND UNTOUCHABLES.

The Census has created a remarkable revulsion of feeling in favour of the classes known as "Depressed" or "Untouchables." At least that seems to be the case in the Punjab. The Musalmans, the Sikhs, and even the orthodox Hindus of the Mahasabha are opening their arms wide to welcome the Depressed Classes as long lost brothers, and intense propaganda is being carried on to induce them to enter themselves in the Census forms as co-religionists of the various propagandists. To add to the confusion, the stern Arya Samajists go about advising the Hindus to discard the name "Hindu" as a degrading term applied to them by the Musalmans. If we are to believe the reports in the Punjab press, this fervent propaganda is causing even intercommunal bitterness. The simple and humble "Untouchables" feel naturally bewildered and overwhelmed by this excess of loving kindness and literally do not know which way to turn. In this perplexity they have received advice from their own leaders that is likely to add to their bewilderment.

For instance, Mr. Bansi Lal, M.L.C., the sweeper member of the Punjab Legislative Council, frankly told a meeting of the Depressed Classes that they should not trust any of the benevolent persons who were persuading them to call themselves Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs. With a still more disarming candour Mr. Bansi Lal confessed that he had so far called himself a Hindu because he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity offered by Congress Hindus and get himself elected to the Council. But, he continued, he knew that he was a sweeper and would ever remain a sweeper whether he called himself a Hindu or a Musalman or a Sikh ; and

he advised his brother Untouchables strongly to call themselves by their real caste names, such as Bhangis or Chuhras, instead of going into any of the three folds and adding to their numbers without doing any real good to themselves.

This confession and advice have created much consternation and bitterness in the Hindu press, and Mr. Bansi is now denounced as a mere " Bhangi of Lahore " by the very papers that once welcomed his candidature and election as a great triumph of the Congress party, and they blame the Hindus now for their short-sightedness in helping him to rise to such dizzy heights. All this may seem amusing, but as a fact it is such incidents that give us revealing glimpses of the real India—the India that is far away from the idealised India of some constitution makers who move about with their heads in the clouds. Ten years ago Mr. Gandhi made removal of untouchability, along with Hindu-Muslim unity, one of the main proofs of fitness for Swaraj. In his present campaign he has discreetly given the go-by to this baffling question of untouchability. But the question is there all the same and is bound sooner or later to make itself felt.

[*Times of India*, 25-2-1931].

UNTOUCHABILITY.

There is a vague but comforting belief abroad that the problem of removing the untouchability of the Depressed Classes has made great headway during the last ten years. When Mr. Gandhi started his non-co-operation campaign ten years ago, he put the removal of untouchability in the forefront of his programme along with khaddar and Hindu-Muslim unity. This time both the Untouchables and the Muslims were put aside, and it was generally believed that at any rate the question of untouchability was no longer a key question and that the problem was far on the way to solution, if it was not actually solved. The recent manifestation of non-co-operation and civil disobedience is supposed to have silently achieved a social revolution and to have practically done away with ideas of high and low caste, and the more orthodox Hindus do believe and fear that the Congress has insidiously undermined the ideas of caste distinctions and taboos. It is no doubt true that in cities the political ferment has reacted on the social conscience of the younger generation, and at least during the excitement and fever of the last twelve

months the age-long disabilities of the deprssed classes appeared to have vanished where people gathered in large numbers. And yet during the space of this same year occurred some events that discount much of the optimism felt in nationalist circles on the question of untouchability. The recent revival of the Nasik temple entry Satysgraha and the determined stoning of the Untouchables by caste Hindus must make these optimists pause and take stock of the situation, especially as among the leaders of the orthodox section at Nasik are to be found staunch Congressmen who have taken a prominent part in the civil disobedience movement.

Another silent but eloquent commentary on the question is supplied by the reply to an interpellation in the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1923 the Council adopted a resolution recommending that " the untouchable classes be allowed to use all public watering places, wells and *dharamshalas* which are built and maintained out of public funds or are administered by bodies appointed by Government or created by statutes, as well as public schools, courts, offices and dispensaries." And here is the resolution adopted by the Kolaba District Local Board on the same subject so recently as December 13th, 1930, that is, when Mr. Gandhi's civil disobedience movement was in full swing : " The principle that the tanks, wells and *dharamshalas* of the Board should be made accessible to Untouchables is accepted by the Board. *But in bringing this principle into* practice the Board should fix up boards that the wells, tanks and *dharamshalas* are open to the Untouchables at *only* those villages in the district where the public opinion is favourable for such action." It should not be difficult to surmise how many villages there must be in the District "where the public opinion is favourable for such action," especially as even the municipality of such an advanced city as Poona quite recently shied at the suggestion to throw public tanks and wells open to all irrespective of caste. It is in the fitness of things, therefore, that now comes the news of the purification of the tank at Mahad (District Kolaba) that had been once again " defiled " by the Untouchables in accordance with the subordinate Court's decision that the tank is a public piece of water. Pending the decision of the appeal to the District Court, the orthodox caste people have found it impossible to do without the water from this tank which is now being used by the Untouchables also. So the Sanatanists purified the tank by first taking one thousand pots full of " defiled " water out of it and then putting cowdung and

other purifying substances (all products of the cow) into it. And it is particularly worth noticing that the lead in this act of " purification " was taken by a Congress patriot recently released from jail. When we take all these things into consderation we begin to understand why Mr. Gandhi is not particularly eager to tackle the problem of untouchability just at present.

[*Times of India*, 23-3-1931].

THE MAHATMA ON MISSIONS.

Mr. Gandhi's ultimatum to Christian Missionaries working in India, as reported by a foreign journalist, created something like consternation, especially among Nationalist Indian Christians. " Even George Joseph," writes the Mahatma pathetically in the inevitable *dementi*, " my erstwhile co-worker and gracious host in Madura, has gone into hysterics without condescending to verify the report." And Mr. Gandhi hastens to add that the report of the interview as originally published " is a travesty of what I have always said and held." So he " re-touches " the statement and gives his own version of the statement " as I should make it." But even this revised and authorised version, with deftly inserted qualifying words here and there, repeats in effect what the original version said, namely, that if the missionaries continue to proselytise he would " like " (not " ask") them to withdraw, and that " the great faiths held by the people of India " (not " India's religions " as in the first report) " are adequate for her people." Therefore, says Mr. Gandhi in conclusion, " India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another."

Several questions of great interest, speculative as well as practical, arise out of these oracular dicta of the Congress Dictator. Evidently Christianity is not, in Mr. Gandhi's opinion, one of the " great faiths held by the people of India " among which he mentions even Zoroastrianism, a faith professed by less than a hundred thousand souls. And yet Christianity actually claims more followers in India than any other " great faith " except Hinduism and Islam. What right has Mr. Gandhi to say that the third biggest communion in India is not one of the great faiths of India ? Again, it is as much the duty of a Christian to prose-ytise as it is of a Musalman to Islamise his neighbour. If, as Maulana Muhammad Ali used to say, " every Musalman is a born proselytiser," so is every

Christian, at least in strict religious theory. Is Mr. Gandhi going to deprive the Indian Christian, along with the Bideshi missionary, of one of his sacred birth-rights? *And that brings us to the more serious* problem : is he going to deprive Musalmans also by statute of their right to convert non-Muslims to Islam? Is any such article in the Declaration of Rights of the future Purna Swaraj—because " India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another" —going to make the working of that Swaraj smoother? Is it going to strengthem the bonds of Hindu-Muslim unity?

And does Mr. Gandhi sincerely believe that " India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another? " " India " is a vague term to use in such a context ; but every year thousands upon thousands of Indians do as a fact get converted, either to Islam or Chritianity, and some even to the Arya Samaj fold. Is Mr. Gandhi going to make such conversion penal? It may well be said that these conversions, of which only a small proportion are really due to the wiles of foreign missionaries, are a necessary evil in the present condition of Hindu society. To put these conversions on the lowest and purely worldly plane, that of betterment in the social scale, is it a small thing that a down-trodden Untouchable who dare not, as in Mr. Gandhi's own Gujarat, drink water even from a cattle trough, should feel that he is as good as any other man, that he is as much a man as even the President of the Congress? Can Mr. Gandhi deny that the Untouchable rises immensely in the scale of humanity as soon as he turns Musalman or Christian? If Mr. Gandhi's words mean anything they mean that Hinduism is at this moment " adequate " for the Dhed and the Bhangi as it is for the Brahmin and the Bania. If it is, what is the meaning of the Parvati Satyagraha at Poona, of the Kala-Ram temple Satysgraha at Nasik, of the recent Government orders that the orders about admitting Untouchable children to school must not be evaded as they are, of that awful cry of agony from the Punjab Adi Hindus at Mooltan, " We are treated worse than dogs? "
[*Times of India*, 28-4-1931].

CONGRESS AND UNTOUCHABLES.

On the auspicious Coconut Day a few Untouchables were invested in Bombay with the sacred thread which, as some of our readers may not know, even the perfectly touchable Sudras have no right to wear. It was in the fitness of things that this dazzling

act of sacrilegious but quick social uplift should have been presided over by that versatile patriot, Mr. K. M. Munshi, whose burning zeal in a dozen fields (including the High Court) is well known and highly appreciated in Congress circles. We do not know if this investiture with the sacred thread, which is the privilege of the three highest castes, will bestow any practical privileges on the Untouchables who have been thus heroically uplifted. For instance, will they be admitted into the Kala Ram temple at Nasik during the coming " Simhastha " pilgrimage to that holy place? In the authentic Rama-Raj, Rama himself, as a strictly constitutional Aryan monarch, had to chop off the head of a Sudra because he had the impudence to practise religious austerities, a privilege reserved to the first three castes. Let us see if in this Satanic Raj the sacred-threaded Untouchables will be admitted into the temple of that same Rama, and whether Mr. Munshi himself will lead them in their revolutionary resolve to do so. If they are so admitted, and if Mr. Munshi's generalship succeeds in getting them so admitted, those refractory followers of Dr. Ambedkar, who wanted on Coconut Day to take part in the investiture ceremony but were not allowed by Congressmen to do so, will have to change their present views and admit that the Congress is really doing something for the Depressed Classes.

There is no denying that at present a vast majority of Untouchables look upon Dr. Ambedkar as their leader and do not regard the Congress as in any way more representative of the Depressed Classes than it is of the Musalmans, or even as a sincere champion of their elementary rights as human beings. A historical interview which Dr. Ambedkar had with Mr. Gandhi on August 14, and which by a remarkable chance has not appeared in any of the Congress or Nationalist papers which report even the activities of the Mahatma's she-goat, is of the utmost interest and importance in this connection. The Mahatma pathetically complained that Dr. Ambedkar had declared that the Congress was not representative of the Depressed Classes although he, Mr. Gandhi, had the Untouchability question nearer his heart than even the Hindu-Muslim puzzle, and although the Congress had spent twenty lakhs of rupees on the removal of the curse of untouchability. In reply Dr. Ambedkar expressed amused surprise that such a large sum as twenty lakhs should have been spent on the removal of untouchability without his knowing it and without any tangible results. The untouchability policy of

the Congress, said Dr. Ambedkar, was like holiday clothes, to be paraded on ceremonial occasions ; and he pointed out the interesting but rather disconcerting fact that the Chairman of the Nasik District Congress Committee was also the leader of the orthodox movement at Nasik to oppose the sacrilegious "Satyagraha" of the Untouchables for entering Kala Ram's temple, and that the Mahatma himself had denounced the "Satyagraha" as "illegitimate." As for the charge brought against himself, that he was anti-national and a traitor to the Congress, Dr. Ambedkar flatly told Mr. Gandhi who tried to soothe the embittered Mahar leader by praising his work for the country at the Round Table Conference : "I have no country. You say I have, but I say again I have no country. No Untouchable with any humanity in him, with the least self-respect in him, will say 'this is my country' about a land in which we cannot live even a dog's life, in which we are not shown consideration that is shown even to cats and dogs." He said further in unforgettable words : "How, and to whom, shall I and my people say what we feel on seeing our ceaseless persecution by those same peasants of Bardoli about whose harassment by Government officials you make such a tremendous fuss ? You have shut your ears to our outcry. And as for your Nationalist press, why, it seems they have not even the type to print things about us ! "

That is perhaps the reason why Congress organs have no room for reports of mass meetings of thousands of Untouchables convened by Dr. Ambedkar's party, although ample room is found for reports of nook and corner gatherings presided over by amiable but untouchable "Nationalist" cricketers ; and that is also the reason why this historical interview has not so far been published by Congress organs that are anxious to publish bulletins about the health of the Mahatma's she-goat. But now that Mr. Munshi has taken the burden of the untouchability problem on his Atlantean shoulders there will surely be a change in the present policy of the Congress towards this problem, and we have no doubt that when the "Simhastha" begins at Nasik Mr. Munshi himself will lead a contingent of be-threaded Untouchables right into Kala Ram's temple, or perish heroically in the gallant attempt.

[*Times of India*, 29-8-1931].

REPRESENTATION AND MISREPRESENTATION.

Who is the real representative of the classes variously known as "Depressed," "Untouchable" or "Antyaja"? Mr. Gandhi or Dr. Ambedkar? The latter's uncompromising opposition to the claim of the Congress to speak for these down-trodden classes has raised this question, and Congress circles and organs are making strenuous efforts to get Dr. Ambedkar discredited in the eyes of the western world because his rebellious attitude is likely to make the Congress's claim to represent the whole of India appear hollow and unsubstantial. Hence the cables sent to Mr. Gandhi, expressing confidence in him and repudiating Dr. Ambedkar, by certain bodies that claim to speak for the Untouchables. The very fact that not only the Muslims but even the Hindus and Sikhs have flatly refused to accept Mr. Gandhi as their representative and to leave the solution of the communal question in his hands is a curious commentary on the claim that the Congress represents the whole of India. But, leaving aside this wider question, let us consider the narrower one whether the Congress really represents the Depressed Classes. The very first phenomenon that puzzles any dispassionate observer of this fascinating though painful problem is the startling fact that wherever, in the last few years, the Depressed Classes have tried to assert their elementary religious, and even civic, rights, khaddar-clad Congressmen have opposed and assaulted them with the war-cry "Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai!" For instance, when the Mahars of Mukhed (near Nasik) only the other day wanted to carry a religious procession through the public thoroughfare, we learn that "crowds of caste Hindus from various villages made a general lathi charge, with shouts of 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki jai,' on the Untouchable Satyagrahis and scattered them in all directions." On the other hand, at the Poona and Nasik temple entry Satyagrahas, and on other occasions, the Untouchables are known to have shouted the war-cry "Ambedkar-ki jai."

Another phenomenon that is likely to puzzle the observer who has no inside knowledge is the attitude of certain bodies representing, or claiming to represent, the Depressed Classes in repudiating Dr. Ambedkar and plumping for the Congress and its sole representative, the Mahatma. It is not commonly known that there are varying degrees of untouchability and that among those who are generally lumped together as "depressed" or "untouchable"

there are exquisite gradations and caste taboos. Thus the Chambhar regards the Mahar as his inferior, and the latter regards the Mang as still lower in the scale of humanity. In a society so constituted, and in the bargain so woefully backward, it is not difficult to imagine how easy it would be to have—or, if necessary, to create—feuds and factions. Even in a homogeneous sub-community like the Mahars, it would not be impossible to find men of very limited attainments but overweening ambition for leadership who would willingly lend their help to pull down a man whose very success in life is almost a crime against the laws of nature which have condemned the community itself to eternal servitude. These are a few of the wheels within wheels which work, or are worked, unseen and which give rise to such phenomena as we have noted. A man like Dr. Ambedkar has to work not only against the conservatism of caste Hindus ; he has also to fight against the caste idea that holds his own Depressed Classes in its iron grip, even more than it holds the educated high caste man. And quite naturally ; the very essence of Hindu reformism itself is to pretend to raise the lower to the next higher caste level, (*e.g.*, by giving sacred threads), leaving those higher still immune from the hated contact. The classical instance of this self-deception—if it is nothing worse—is Mr. Gandhi's solution of the problem, namely that the Antyajas should be raised to the level of Sudras, who should intermarry with them, thus leaving the sacrosact " traivarnikas " (the three upper castes) safe from the dreaded intermixture.
[*Times of India*, 20-10-1931].

PREPOSTEROUS CLAIMS.

Despair at his failure to arrive at an agreement with the minorities seems to have turned Mr. Gandhi into a mere politician. Replying to a question at Birmingham, he is reported to have said that the Congress had produced a settlement " which had been accepted by the Hindu, the Musalman and the Sikh." We should like to know which settlement Mr. Gandhi referred to when he made this surprising statement. Did he mean the still-born Nehru Report which was the Congress reply to the late Lord Birkenhead's challenge to Nationalist India to put forward an agreed demand ? If so, when did the Musalmans accept it ? If they did accept it, why is there a painful breach between the Congress and such representative Muslim bodies as the Muslim Conference and the Khilafat

Committee? If there had been a settlement acceptable to all communities, would the numerous All-Parties Conferences have failed, and would Mr. Gandhi have been reduced to the desperate remedy of starving himself for twenty-two days? Mr. Gandhi made a still more remarkable statement in connexion with this "accepted" settlement when he said that it was for the British Government "to hand over the country to the Congress and leave the Congress to settle with the minorities." How does this modest demand square with the assertion that the minorities had already accepted the Congress settlement? Incidentally, we get a side-light on the method by which the Congress is going to "settle" with the minorities from the refreshingly candid confession that "if he (Gr. Mandhi) had the opportunity he would dispossess the Indian Princes of their insolent palaces." We wonder if Mr. Gandhi expects the Princes to fold their hands in true Mahatmic humility and hand over their "insolent" palaces to the agents of the Congress, or, at best, to offer strictly non-violenct Satyagraha fortified by a few world-advertised fasts. Evidently Mr. Gandhi's chagrin at his failure has put him off his guard and we thus have a glimpse of what is in his heart—ruthless Congress rule (under the velvet glove of professed non-violence) in spite of opposition from any minority or "insolent" princeling. What this would mean in actual practice, especially "if Britain declared that she would withdraw from India," and did actually withdraw at Mr. Gandhi's courteous request, it is not difficult to visualise. It is a grim prospect over which every separate interest in India ought to ponder.

It is mere camouflage, and not very ingenuous camouflage, to ask the world to believe that the interests which cannot now come to a settlement would immediately do so as soon as the British Government declared its willingness to "hand over the country to the Congress." According to Mr. Gandhi the Government of India is a wedge between the communities, and organic life in India is being poisoned by foreign matter, which has to be expelled as the first condition of a settlement. We differ from that. What nationalism, or patriotism, there is in India, whatever cohesion there is among the politically minded minority in this vast continent, is actually due to the existence of this "foreign matter" that has, unintentionally perhaps, acted as a healthy irritant to rouse the "nation," *i.e.*, the politically minded part of it, from age-long stupor and make it conscious of inequities and injustices, whether social

or religious or political. To be brutally frank, what has united Hindu and Musalman in the last few years is more the dislike of the "foreign matter" than love of country. What is the use of shutting our eyes to facts however unpalatable they might be? And what is the use of bitterly slanging Mr. MacDonald for telling us not to shut our eyes to such facts? What wisdom is there in asking the British Government to "hand over the country to the Congress" when, the very next day after this peremptory demand, the General Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee is howled nown when defending the Congress at a public meeting at Parel in this City which has been proudly proclaimed to the world as the stronghold of the Congress during the Civil Disobedience agitation? What sense is there in persisting that the Congress is the sole representative of every interest in this vast country, including the Depressed Class when caste Hindus in Madras stone a procession of Adi-Dravidas who had the temerity to claim the right of using a certain road? Day after day cables are being sent to the Round Table Conference repudiating the Congress and denouncing Mr. Gandhi's claim to represent the millions of down-trodden human beings whom, but for the existence of the foreign irritant, no one would perhaps have thought of as having any claims in any "national" divison of spoils. Yet we are told that all will be well if only India is handed over to the Congress. As we said yesterday, the fact is that the India which Mr. Gandhi imagines does not exist. [*Times of India*, 22-10-1931.]

UNTOUCHABLES AND MR. GANDHI.

At the end of last week Mr. Gandhi was lamenting that India was misrepresented by the London papers and offering to supply them with the truth from the pure and undefiled well of Congress propaganda. A day later Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah, presiding at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference at Gurgaon in the Punjab, said that "we see a lot of misrepresentation being carried on in London," and he went on to show how Mr. Gandhi was misrepresenting the case of the untouchables. Mr. Gandhi, the Rao Bahadur added, was a good, kind-hearted man, a great man, one with few rivals, and so on—all very polite and eulogistic, leading up to the warning: "Beware of Mr. Gandhi, the politician." That was only another way of saying what Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan, delegates representing the Depressed Classes at the Round

Table Conference, had stated in the letter we published last week. They exposed Mr. Gandhi's hostility to the claims of the Depressed Classes and said that "Mr. Gandhi is not only not playing the part of a friend of the Depressed Classes, but he is not even playing the part of an honest foe." When charges like that are being made by responsible men it ill becomes Mr. Gandhi to raise the old cry that English papers are unfair to India and misrepresent what is going on in this country. At the best of times it is not a very profitable cry, and in this case it only leads to the old question, "What is truth ?" The difficulty of answering that can be known to few so well as to Mr. Gandhi who, as he has often said, has devoted much of his life to searching for the truth.

In this dispute between Mr. Gandhi and the Untouchables, statements are constantly being made which should be capable of proof or disproof. It is not a matter of searching for truth in the abstract, but an argument as to what has been done by the Congress and Mr. Gandhi. Rao Bahadur M. C. Rajah flatly denies the claim made by Mr. Gandhi that the Congress had been taking care of the Untouchables from the beginning, that the Congress had always stood and still stood for the removal of untouchability, and that the Congress had always championed the cause of the Untouchables. "I say," is the emphatic reply of Rao Bahadur Rajah, "that these statements are all untrue." Is the implied challenge to be taken up, or is it merely to be added to the charges of a very similar nature already made by Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Srinivasan and to be left unanswered ? The matter is not one that can well be left alone. When Mr. Gandhi is thus attacked he cannot evade the task of defending himself and the Congress and yet make vague and unsubstantiated charges of misrepresentation against the London press. The apostle of truth has been exposed before the meeting of the All-India Depressed Classes Conference as saying what is not true about these very classes. Are we to hear from Mr. Gandhi that this is only more misrepresentation ? The problem becomes every day more interesting and more sharply defined; but there is no sign of that change of heart which Rao Bahadur Rajah seems to postulate as necessary for the solution of the problem.

The Untouchables have apparently to satisfy themselves, if they can, with Mr. Gandhi's recent assurance in *Young India* that

to lead a campaign of civil resistance on their behalf and to paralyse the Hindu orthodox opposition. That assurance is rather cold comfort in view of the fact that Mr. Gandhi has more than once refused an opportunity of leading such a campaign. In fact all these resolves and assertions mean very little. An ounce of practice is far better than a pound of principles. What is the use of talking of formulas when we see what is actullly happening around us in all parts of the country ? A party of Untouchables is assaulted, by khaddar clad people who shout "Mahatma Gandhiki Jai," for carrying their holy book in a palanquin through a public thoroughfare ; another party is assaulted because it dares to carry a bridegroom in a palanquin, at Rajapura (practically a suburb of Mr. Gandhi's stronghold, Ahmedabad) ; high caste children are removed from a school because two untouchable children are allowed to sit with them; such is the endless stream of every day events (of which perhaps not one in a hundred is reported) which proves for practical men the truth or otherwise of the claims put forward by Mr. Gandhi and the Congress. And all this has happened in the last few weeks, full ten years after Mr. Gandhi made the removal of untouchability a condition precedent to, and a proof of fitness for Swaraj.

[*Times of India*, 3-11-1931].

TEMPLES AND UNTOUCHABLES.

On November 5 begins the Satyagraha of the Untouchables at Nasik to gain the "right" to enter the famous Kala-Ram Temple. It is a pity Mahatma Gandhi is not there to take the lead and, as he is reported in *Young India* to have declared to an admiring audience in London, "paralyse Hindu orthodoxy." He had two such occasions in the last two years, once when Untouchables attempted to storm the Parvati temple at Poona and again at Nasik when Untouchables made Satyagraha for establishing their "right" to enter the Kala Ram Temple. But he refused on both occasions to take the lead; in fact he expressed stern disapproval of these attempts to paralyse orthodoxy. Nor have his lieutenants in this Presidency shown any enthusiasm for the Nasik Satyagraha. The President of the Bombay Presidency Congress Committee is discreetly silent, and Mr. K. M. Munshi, who distributed sacred threads among Bombay Untouchables a few weeks ago and thus raised them at a stroke even above the "touchable" Sudras, has refused to

have anything to do with the Nasik Satyagraha. He has also said in so many words that the Congress cannot afford to lose the sympathy of the orthodox Hindus. "Temple entry Satyagraha," he said, "means arousing caste and community passions......To dignify temple entry into a national issue would be suicidal."

It has been said many times by Congress organs and orators that it is a "primary" or "elementary" right of every Hindu to go into any public temple for worshipping the god in it. These enthusiastic organs and orators are wrong. Orthodox Hinduism does not believe that "God created all alike" or that all Hindus have equal rights and duties. The very structure of Hindu society, based as it is on "Chātur-varṇya," the Hindu Dharma itself which is based on "varṇāshrama," denies any such equality *ab initio*. It is no use denying or shutting one's eyes to facts. Touchable Hindu society is made up of four water-tight "varṇas," of which again the fourth, the Sudra, is in the communion on sufferance only as a necessary evil. The Mahatma himself for all his professions of liberalism and paralysing orthodoxy cannot get over this four caste idea; he is a firm believer in it, and in fact that has always been his strongest argument whenever he claims to be an orthodox Sanatanist Hindu. And where there are castes there are bound to be "outcastes." It is the caste system and the Karma theory which are the foundation of the untouchability idea. So long as this socio-religious structure of the Hindu communion remains intact it is illogical to talk of temple entry as an elementary right of the Untouchables, or to put it on the same level as their legal and civil right to walk on any public road.

[*Times of India*, 5-11-1931].

UNTOUCHABILITY AND THE CONGRESS.

After much flirtation with the dangerous problem set up by the Nasik temple entry Satyagraha started by the Untouchables, the Bombay Congress Committee has taken its courage in both hands and made some grave though vague resolves to give help to the satyagrahis. The Congress tacticians have apparently been driven to desperation by the slogans of the Nasik satyagragrahis, "Ambedkarki Jai" and even "Shaukat Ali Zindabad!" This was too much, especially in view of Mr. Gandhi's claims at the Round Table Conference, and the conference of Hindu leaders called by the Congress junta on Sunday last was the result. The

most interesting speech made on this occasion was by Mr. G. B. Pradhan of the Social Equality League. It was a speech full of stinging truths which exposed the hypocrisy of the Congress in the matter of untouchability. "Dr. Ambedkar," said Mr. Pradhan, "is the true leader of the Untouchables, not Mr. Gandhi who claims to represent 95 per cent. of the population of India. I ask you all: Do you *yourselves* believe this claim?" What can be said to a man who asks such awkward questions? The Congress press report has rightly boycotted him. But we must say that the right note was struck by Mr. Natarajan who urged that removal of untouchability was a purely Hindu question and the Congress as a national institution had no business to meddle with such purely communal questions. He went to the root of the matter when he pointed out—as has been done times out of number in these columns—that untouchability is the logical and necessary outcome of the caste system itself, and that if untouchability is to go caste itself must go root and branch.

There is no doubt that the Congress has made a mistake in making removal of untouchability a main plank in its platform, just as it made a still greater blunder in tagging the Khilafat question on to Indian politics. What business, for example, has the Parsi president of the B.P.C.C. to meddle with a purely socio-religious question of the Hindus? Even Mr. Gandhi who in 1921 declared, for reasons best left unanalysed, that untouchability must be removed if Swaraj was to be won in one year, seems to have seen his mistake. He now coldly tells the Depressed Classes to wait till Swaraj is won for the redress of their manifold grievances. We do not know that even under Swaraj untouchability will cease to exist as if by magic because Mr. Gandhi or some other Congress dictator wishes it so to cease. Prejudices so deep-rooted as to last through hundreds of generations cannot be easily destroyed. Political opportunism like that shown by the B.P.C.C. will only complicate the difficult problem instead of making its solution easy. Any way, the Congress action is not going to add to the credit of a body whose insincerity in the matter has become a byword with the Indian public.

[*Times of India*, 15-11-1931]

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